

**March 15, 2018**

**La Leche League USA (LLL USA) reaffirms its commitment to the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes***

In October 2016, LLL USA Council publicly affirmed its commitment to uphold the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (the *WHO Code*). This statement with links to additional information on the *WHO Code* also can be viewed at the LLL USA website - <https://www.lllusa.org/about-us/>.

"LLL USA remains committed to honoring the spirit and the letter of the *WHO Code* – the World Health Organization (WHO) *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and subsequent WHA Resolutions. LLL USA does not condone any actions that would allow a company that is not upholding its obligations under the *WHO Code* to advertise at La Leche League events. Click [here](#) for more information about the *WHO Code*."

In October 2017, the 90th Nestlé Nutrition Institute<sup>1</sup> Workshop was held in Switzerland. Speakers included breastfeeding researchers and clinicians. Two of the presenters, Dr. Ruth Lawrence and Dr. Paula Meier, also are longtime members of the LLLI Health Advisory Council (HAC), a group of health professionals appointed by the LLLI Board to serve as volunteer consultants to the LLLI Board and Executive Director regarding issues and research pertaining to breastfeeding and human milk. In reaction to the participation of Dr. Lawrence and Dr. Meier, LLL USA, together with other LLL entities, asked the LLLI Board of Directors to remove these two HAC members who spoke at the event and to conduct a review of LLLI policies regarding HAC membership. LLLI declined to publicly address the request for action on HAC membership, policies, and procedures.

In light of the continued inaction by the LLLI Board, the LLL USA Council wishes to reaffirm its ongoing commitment to the *WHO Code* and to reiterate its stand that the LLLI Board must remove Dr. Ruth Lawrence and Dr. Paula Meier from the HAC in order to protect the brand and integrity of LLLI. Furthermore, the Board should advise current members of the HAC that participation in promotional activities for companies or organizations that do not comply with the *WHO Code* is not compatible with their obligations as healthcare professionals under the *WHO Code*. HAC members who do not maintain compliance with the *WHO Code* should resign or be removed from the HAC.

Every day, in communities across the USA, nearly 3000 volunteer Leaders work hard to provide free monthly meetings, respond to individual requests for breastfeeding/chestfeeding information, raise funds, and run events to support nursing families, while also abiding by the *WHO Code*. This is not an easy task in our highly commercialized world with few regulatory protections and a vast imbalance of resources for the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding. We stand with these LLL volunteers and the LLL 40-year commitment to the protection of breastfeeding under the *WHO Code*.

The *WHO Code* protects, promotes, and supports breastfeeding, and compliance with the *WHO Code* is integral to the work of LLL USA. LLL USA Council, Area Networks, Areas, Groups, and Leaders are held accountable for their adherence to the principles and the spirit of the *WHO Code*. LLL USA is dedicated to working together with organizations and individuals that demonstrate the same commitment. For more information, please contact the LLL USA Council at [Council@lllusa.org](mailto:Council@lllusa.org).

<sup>1</sup>Nestlé Nutrition Institute is a fully-owned subsidiary of Nestlé S.A., which does not abide by the *WHO Code*.