



## Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

### For Immediate Release

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### IRS decision recognizes that public health begins with breastfeeding

New Rochelle, NY, February 11, 2011 - The Internal Revenue Service decision to include breastfeeding supplies as deductible medical expenses is a major step forward for US health policy and infant health.

"This is great news for mothers and babies," says Gerald Calnen MD, president of the *Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine*. "A major US agency understands that public health begins with breastfeeding, and that agency is setting policy to support US families." Clearly this should be a model for governments and insurers worldwide.

The IRS decision comes after a concerted effort by child health advocates in Congress to educate officials. Senators Jeff Merkley and Tom Harkin and Representatives Sander Levin and Carolyn B. Maloney led efforts to reverse an earlier IRS decision, which precluded breast pumps and lactation supplies from coverage. The original letters to IRS Commissioner Shulman include the list of Senators and Members of Congress who helped make this important request. Click on the following links for the original letters: [Senate](#) and [House](#).

Coming on the heels of the just-released Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, this decision provides concrete support for nursing mothers. This document outlines a comprehensive strategy, ranging from peer support to greater funding for breastfeeding research, to enable mothers to achieve their infant feeding goals.

"After years of exhorting mothers to try harder, we've finally started implementing policies that remove the 'booby traps' that undermine breast-feeding success," Calnen said. "The IRS decision is evidence that leaders in Washington get it. And that's a major step forward for moms and babies."

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The **Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine** ([www.bfmed.org](http://www.bfmed.org)) is a global organization of physicians dedicated to the promotion, protection, and support of breastfeeding through education, research, and advocacy. It promotes the development and dissemination of clinical practice guidelines. The **Academy** has prepared clinical protocols for the care of breastfeeding mothers and infants that are available on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) National Guidelines Clearinghouse website.

*Breastfeeding Medicine*, the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, is an authoritative, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal published bimonthly in print and online by **Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.** ([www.liebertpub.com](http://www.liebertpub.com)). The Journal publishes original scientific articles, reviews, and case studies on a broad spectrum of topics in lactation medicine. It presents evidence-based research advances and explores the immediate and long-term outcomes of breastfeeding, including the epidemiologic, physiologic, and psychological benefits of breastfeeding. Tables of contents and a free sample issue are available at [www.liebertpub.com/bfm](http://www.liebertpub.com/bfm)

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