

## **What would licensure do?**

1. Licensure will provide consumers, health care providers, insurance personnel and employers with the ability to identify qualified lactation consultants.
2. Licensure will provide a means of standardizing practice and maintaining sound oversight of lactation professionals.
3. Licensure will provide reimbursement within the health care system will ensure access to timely, skilled, competent and culturally relevant breastfeeding support for all mothers and babies.
4. Licensure will provide reimbursement for services will positively impact the growth of the profession of lactation consulting creating adequate numbers of IBCLCs needed to meet current and future needs.

***Dear Florida Legislator,  
Licensure of IBCLCs will protect mothers and babies by clearly stating who is qualified as a lactation consultant in FLORIDA. Licensure of IBCLCs will also provide Florida mothers and babies with better access to care by making lactation services reimbursable through private insurers and federal agencies that only reimburse licensed providers.***

**Research shows that mothers who have access to IBCLC care have higher initiation and duration rates for breastfeeding.** Research also shows that breastfed babies are healthier than formula babies. Among diseases breastmilk reduces the risk of ear infections, SIDS, Leukemia, asthma, obesity, and the deadly Necrotizing Enterocolitis. Mother's milk is also beneficial for babies' brain development. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that babies have the exclusive nourishment of breastmilk for their first six months of life.

**Florida is in the bottom 33% in the nation for its breastfeeding rates, while it sits in the top 44% for infant mortality.** The direct inverse relationship is more than pure coincidence. Florida mothers and babies could be healthier with the education, support, and care that IBCLCs are clinically trained to provide. Over 77% of Florida mothers leave the hospital breastfeeding their babies, but only 18.3% make it to the 6-month mark recommended by the AAP for exclusive breastfeeding.

## **WIC Does Not Provide For This Service**

Around 71% of WIC participants are on Medicaid. Medicaid providers must be licensed. Therefore, most often Medicaid and WIC mothers are referred to WIC peer counselors; who only have a 1 or 2 day basic breastfeeding support course, they are not IBCLC lactation consultants.

**There is no protection within the FLORIDA LAW that governs who is qualified to give this vital health information that affects FLORIDA mothers and babies!**

**An international board that demands rigorous levels of requirements already certifies IBCLCs. Certification requires prerequisite college health science courses and hundreds of clinical hours under the supervision of other IBCLCs. Therefore, the candidate must pass the international exam to prove competency. There are 25,000 IBCLCs in ninety countries. The skill set and expertise of IBCLCs is well recognized by the medical community in the United States and worldwide. In fact, many hospitals with birthing centers employ IBCLCs to assist their breastfeeding mothers. However, access to IBCLCs outside of the hospital setting is limited. Little or inconsistent insurance coverage makes it extremely difficult for mothers to seek the expertise of a private IBCLC and for private IBCLCs to survive in business. Licensure would change that.**

## **There is Confusion in the Marketplace**

**Physicians are concerned and want only the most qualified to help their breastfeeding mothers and babies. Consumers are unaware and not informed when they receive breastfeeding help about the differences between a:**

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (highest standard of education and clinical hours)**
- WIC Peer Counselor (1-2 day workshop training)**
- La Leche League Leader**
- Certified Lactation Counselor or Specialist (Single 45-hour workshop )**

## **The Average Age of an IBCLC is 50+ Years Old**

**Younger Floridians will join the profession once it is legally recognized; growing the profession and creating new jobs in FLORIDA.**

**Licensure of IBCLCs will provide JOBS in**

- |                                     |                             |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>-Maternity Hospitals</b>         | <b>-Pediatric Hospitals</b> | <b>-WIC Offices</b>                    |
| <b>-Hospital Outpatient Clinics</b> | <b>-Pediatric Offices</b>   | <b>-IBCLC Private Practice Offices</b> |
| <b>-Research Projects</b>           |                             |  |

**Regina Benjamin, was the first United States Surgeon General to support licensure of IBCLCs and we do too.**

**Thank You for Your Time and for Supporting Licensure of Florida IBCLCs!**