May 29, 2009

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Maloney:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I would like to share our support for the Breastfeeding Promotion Act.

Breastfeeding has proven to have numerous health benefits for both mother and child. Studies show that children who are not breastfed have higher rates of mortality, meningitis, some types of cancers, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, bacterial and viral infections, ear infections, juvenile diabetes, some chronic liver diseases, allergies and obesity. Due to the resounding evidence of improved child health and well being, AAP recommends that mothers breastfeed exclusively for the first six months, but continue breastfeeding for at least the first year of a child’s life.

Unfortunately, due to financial restraints and work demands, not all women are afforded the opportunity to nurse their children, despite the proven health benefits. Maternal employment is one of the most cited obstacles to initiation and continuation of breastfeeding and as many as 45 to 50 percent of mothers return to work full-time within six months of their infant’s birth.

The Breastfeeding Promotion Act would take significant steps toward assuring new mothers the opportunity to breastfeed their children by protecting all breastfeeding mothers from discrimination. The legislation would also help alleviate the financial burden of breastfeeding for both the mother and her employer by allowing breastpumps to be reimbursed under flexible savings accounts (FSAs) and providing a tax credit to employers to take steps to support breastfeeding mothers.

Again, I share the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics and look forward to working with you as this legislation moves through Congress.

Sincerely,

David T. Tayloe, Jr., MD FAAP
President