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## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE  
BREASTFEEDING AMONG MOTHERS WHO RECEIVE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE  
FROM MEDICAID.

1           WHEREAS, although the health benefits of breastfeeding are  
2 well-established, few budget analysts consider breastfeeding as  
3 a health cost-savings strategy; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture's  
6 Economic Research Service estimates that at least \$3,600,000,000  
7 in medical expenses could be saved each year if the number of  
8 children breastfed for at least six months increased from forty-  
9 three per cent for babies born in 2006, to fifty per cent, as  
10 recommended by the United States Surgeon General; and  
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12           WHEREAS, a study reported in *Pediatrics* concluded that, for  
13 every one thousand babies who are not breastfed, there are 2,033  
14 more medical office visits, 212 extra days of hospitalization,  
15 and 609 excess prescriptions; and  
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17           WHEREAS, breastfed infants experience fewer or less severe  
18 cases of diarrhea, respiratory infections, pneumonia, urinary  
19 infections, and ear infections. Breastfeeding also is  
20 associated with a lower risk of asthma, childhood obesity,  
21 diabetes, childhood leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome;  
22 and  
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24           WHEREAS, in addition to the benefits to babies, mothers who  
25 breastfeed experience less postpartum bleeding, an earlier  
26 return to pre-pregnancy weight, a reduced risk of ovarian cancer  
27 and premenopausal breast cancer, and a lower risk of  
28 osteoporosis; and  
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1 WHEREAS, forty-one per cent of births in the country are  
2 covered by Medicaid, and increasing breastfeeding rates among  
3 these infants may be one potential strategy for state budget  
4 savings; and

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6 WHEREAS, young mothers, those with less formal education,  
7 and African-American mothers are the least likely to breastfeed.  
8 In 2006, only twenty-four per cent of mothers under age twenty  
9 breastfed their infants at six months of age, compared with 50.4  
10 per cent of mothers age thirty or older; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, the National Business Group on Health notes that  
13 workplace breastfeeding programs may reduce health care costs by  
14 decreasing the risk of some health issues for women and  
15 children, reducing lost productivity and reducing absenteeism  
16 associated with caring for a sick child; and

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18 WHEREAS, in the current fiscally challenging environment,  
19 the State would be wise to seek additional ways to reduce health  
20 care costs by considering the economic benefits of  
21 breastfeeding; now, therefore,

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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
24 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
25 of 2010, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Human  
26 Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, is  
27 urged to develop a program to encourage breastfeeding among  
28 mothers who receive medical assistance from Medicaid; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
31 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Directors of Human  
32 Services and Health.

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OFFERED BY: Marilyn B. Lee  
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