

# GLOBAL BREASTFEEDING COLLECTIVE



## MEDIA STATEMENT

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### **Yale, Johns Hopkins, UC Davis Experts Call For End To Exploitative Marketing Used By The Baby Formula Milk Industry**

Formula milk marketing tactics are exploitative, and regulations need to be urgently strengthened and properly implemented according to a new three-paper Series published in The Lancet.

Experts from the Yale School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, and University of California, Davis, shared the findings and the implications for the United States and called for policies that enable and sustain breastfeeding.

“The recent formula crisis and the water crises in Jackson, Flint, and elsewhere highlight how systemic racism, exploitative marketing practices, and accelerating impacts of climate change make the US infant feeding system vulnerable and perpetuate inequities,” said Cecília Tomori, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and Bloomberg School of Public Health. “Greater investment in policies that enable breastfeeding for all and protect it from exploitative marketing practices is needed to create a more resilient and equitable first food system.”

Speakers shared strategies for ensuring that breastfeeding is understood as a human right and the collective responsibility of society, and called for more effective protection, promotion, and support for breastfeeding.

“In the US, Black and Hispanic women are much less likely than White women to meet their breastfeeding goals,” said Professor Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, Yale University School of Public Health. “This inequity exists because of complex interrelated social, political, economic, commercial and health care structural barriers. A whole-of-society response is needed to respect the right that all women have to breastfeed their children for as long as they want.”

Panelists - including representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National WIC Association, the United States Breastfeeding Committee, lactation and family

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policy advocates, and healthcare professionals - shared how infant feeding decisions are undermined by insufficient investment in policies to support breastfeeding and the economic and political power of the dominant formula milk companies.

“The last year has reminded Americans how we are at the mercy of a handful of large companies who produce infant and follow-up formulas, said Professor Katheryn Russ, University of California – Davis. “The vulnerability came as a surprise, but it is in no small part the result of decades of collective policy choices that make it harder than it needs to be to breastfeed in the United States.”

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