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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 25, 2016

Breastfeeding coalition to host local ‘Global Big Latch On’ event

Lawrence, Kan. — For the first time, the Breastfeeding Coalition of Douglas County will join the “Global Big Latch On,” a synchronized breastfeeding event held in conjunction with World Breastfeeding Week, Aug. 1-7. The coalition’s goal is to raise awareness about the community support available for breastfeeding.

The local “Global Big Latch On” will be part of a community event from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 6, at Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont St. The event, which is free and open to anyone, will include:

- **10 a.m.-noon** — Community partners will have breastfeeding support information available.
- **10 a.m.-noon** - Photos and stories of mothers’ breastfeeding journeys on display.
- **10-10:20 a.m.** - Registration to participate in the “Global Big Latch On.”
- **10:30-10:45 a.m.** - “Global Big Latch On” takes place. Mothers who are breastfeeding or pumping/expressing milk will be counted for the official tally.
- **11 a.m.** - Storytime for children.

Cary Allen, a certified breastfeeding educator at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department and member of the breastfeeding coalition, is excited about hosting a local site for the “Global Big Latch On” and encourages breastfeeding moms to participate and help put Douglas County on the map. Last year, 15,336 women participated from 654 locations in 28 countries.

One of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant is to breastfeed. The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to 2 years of age or beyond. In Kansas, although most mothers hope to breastfeed and 77 percent of babies start out being breastfed, only 11 percent are exclusively breastfed 6 months later.

Allen said the success rate among mothers who want to breastfeed can be improved through support from families, friends, employers and policymakers. “It’s important to think about how to value well-being from the start of life, respect each other and care for the community we live in,” Allen said. “We can work together to support each mother through her individual breastfeeding journey.”

Agencies involved in the Breastfeeding Coalition of Douglas County include the Health Department, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, La Leche League of Lawrence, Lawrence OB-GYN Specialists, Lawrence Pediatrics, Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, tiny-K Early Intervention of Douglas County, Lawrence Parents as Teachers, Mother’s Milk Kansas and Sunflower Birth and Lactation.