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**AUGUST 7, 2009**

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ MARKS BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS WEEK IN THE BRONX**

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. marked World Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7, by reminding new mothers in The Bronx about the health and economic benefits of breast milk over formula. According to the Bronx Health Link, breast milk strengthens the infant's immune system, and exclusively breastfed babies are less likely to get ear infections, gastrointestinal infections, rashes, food allergies, diarrhea, asthma, diabetes, and obesity, and are at lower risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In addition, mothers who breastfeed have a lower risk of developing type II diabetes and osteoporosis.

"This is a time to acknowledge the importance of breastfeeding for mother, baby and family. Mothers in The Bronx should be aware of the great benefits that breastfeeding brings to their children's health and to their own," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "It gives the nutrients and the immune factors that are important for protecting infants against the most serious illness they can get."

Breastfeeding also brings numerous economic benefits, such as: mothers can save between \$1,160 and \$3,915 each year, depending on the brand of formula purchased; breastfeeding requires less labor than infant formula: no bottles to heat, formula to mix or bottles to purchase; total medical care costs are lower for fully breastfed infants than never-breastfed infants since breastfed infants typically need fewer sick care visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations; breastfeeding mothers miss less work, as their infants are sick less often, employer medical costs also are lower and employee productivity is higher; breastfeeding is better for our environment because there is less trash and plastic waste compared to that produced by formula cans and bottle supplies.

Diaz Jr. also showed support for the "Breastfeeding Mothers' Bill of Rights", which was recently approved by the State Senate and delivered to the Governor David Paterson. This bill will address the failing of doctors and medical centers to provide pregnant women and new mothers with the detailed information on the benefits of breastfeeding; and will also give women the right to control all the stages of decision making about breastfeeding their babies from the time of the delivery. The bill establishes, among others things, that mothers will have the right to have their babies with them and breastfeed them within one hour after birth, and will have the right to insist that their babies will not receive any bottle feeding or pacifiers in the hospital.