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MOTHERS' MILK BANK AT AUSTIN JOINS MILK BANK PEERS IN URGENT CALL FOR DONATIONS

Nationwide supply is inadequate to meet demand for premature and ill infants in need

AUSTIN, TEXAS – February 28, 2011 – The Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin, one of the largest suppliers of donor human milk to hospitals across Texas and in 14 states, is joining The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) to ask healthy lactating mothers to consider donating to a milk bank so that fragile babies will be fed this life-giving and sustaining nutrition.

HMBANA announced that the non-profit milk banks in the U.S. have reached critically low levels of screened donor human milk for fragile babies in relation to demand.

“We are grateful for the hundreds of women who have donated their time and their life-saving milk to The Mothers' Milk Bank over the last year,” says Kim Updegrove, RN, CNM, MSN, MPH, Executive Director, The Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin. “Our goal is to find 500 donor women in 2011 to meet the growing demand for this resource.”

Neonatologists who care for the tiniest and most fragile patients use donor human milk because it provides immunologic and growth factors as well as optimal nutrition. “A mothers' own milk is the superior food for premature infants, and when a mother cannot provide, donor human milk is the next best thing – it is truly life-saving,” says Peter Untalan, MD, a neonatologist and president of the board of trustees, The Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin.

The Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin provides donor milk to 57 hospitals across Texas and the U.S., including Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, where mothers' own milk and donor human milk are the standard of care for premature infants. Premature infants who are fed with human milk decrease their risks of a serious and life-threatening intestinal infection known as necrotizing enterocolitis, or NEC.

Though rates of premature birth remain steady in the U.S., at one in 8 live births, the demand for donor human milk is rising because of its effectiveness. “We have seen the rates of NEC decline from 8-10 percent to less than one percent since 2009, when we began requiring pasteurized donor breast milk when mothers' own milk is not available

for our infants,” says Nancy Hurst, PhD, RN, IBCLC, and director of Women’s Support Services at Texas Children’s Hospital.

Women who are lactating can donate milk to The Mothers’ Milk Bank at Austin regardless of where they live. In 2010 the milk bank received donations from women in 35 states and 62 cities in Texas. Prospective donors across the U.S. may call toll-free 1-877-813-6455. In Central Texas, prospective donors may call 512-494-0800

About the Mothers’ Milk Bank at Austin

The Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin is a non-profit organization whose mission is to accept, pasteurize and dispense donor human milk by physician prescription, primarily to premature and ill infants.

Donor human milk — what is it exactly?

- It’s life saving nourishment for sick and premature babies.
- It’s pasteurized breast milk scientifically analyzed to meet the specific needs of fragile and sick babies.
- It’s passive immunization against everything scary — and —
- It’s Mother Natures’ Most Powerful Prescription.

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