

British Columbia Lactation Consultant Association News Release

January 19, 2017

First and foremost: our deepest condolences to Mr. Chen on the loss of his wife and to Florence Leung's son on the loss of his mother. We imagine the pain of discussing such a deeply personal loss and recognize the courage of Mr. Chen for doing so in the hopes of having a dialogue for change.

Breastfeeding and birth represent a developmentally vulnerable time of transition for the mother and baby, one that is deserving of protection and support (UNICEF, 2008), whether that is for perinatal depression or infant feeding assistance. British Columbia Lactation Consultants Association and many other professional organizations recognize that breastfeeding is an important health behavior that has lifelong benefits for both mother and baby (Canadian Pediatric Society, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Dietitians of Canada, 2012). We agree with Mr. Chen that mothers who give formula are not bad mothers and shaming mothers who do not breastfeed is not a strategy the BCLCA endorses under any circumstances. As an organization, we support access to services that are tailored to the unique needs of each mother-baby pair as determined by collaborating with a knowledgeable healthcare provider starting in the prenatal period. Without knowing the details of care that Ms. Leung received, it has been our observation that there has been an erosion of universal support for mothers undertaking this critical transition and increased difficulty obtaining specialized services, such as those of an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant or mental health professional, in a timely and family-focused manner. Therefore, we call on our provincial government to commit to the revitalization of appropriate, acceptable, and accessible services for young families and timely access to more specialized help so that no family ever experiences such a deep and resonating loss as have Mr. Chen and his son.

References

UNICEF (2008). Women's and Children's Rights in a Human Rights Based Approach to Development: A Working Paper. Retrieved from: <http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/WomensAndChildrensRightsInAHumanRightsBasedApproach.pdf>

Health Canada (2012). Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Birth to Six Months. Retrieved from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/infant-nourisson/recom/index-eng.php>