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## **Fellows Lead American Academy of Nursing at Surgeon General's “Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding”**

Washington, DC (January 25, 2011) – A sponsor of widely acclaimed breastfeeding initiatives, the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) was represented by Fellows Diane Spatz, PhD, RNC, FAAN; Linda Pugh, PhD, RNC, CNE, FAAN; and Karin Cadwell, PhD, RN, FAAN, IBCLC, at the pivotal “Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding” event led by U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin on January 21. The event unveiled an unprecedented [publication](#) outlining the health benefits of breastfeeding for infants and mothers.

Spatz is the current Chair of the Academy's Expert Panel on Breastfeeding which has existed since 2002. Engaged throughout the meeting, Spatz raised questions and forged relationships with prominent stakeholders, including Benjamin and Tonya Lewis, a national spokesperson for the A Health Baby Begins With You campaign, which increases awareness about infant mortality.

“The Surgeon General's Call to Action is unprecedented. As nurses we must continually emphasize the critical role of nurses in evidence-based lactation support and care,” Spatz said. “Nurses are at the forefront in helping women achieve their breastfeeding goals.”

Despite its benefits, only 13 percent of babies are exclusively breastfed. According to an Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health news release, Benjamin's “Call to Action” identifies ways that families, communities, employers and health care professionals can improve breastfeeding rates and increase support for breastfeeding:

- Communities should expand and improve programs that provide mother-to-mother support and peer counseling;
- Health care systems should ensure that maternity care practices provide education and counseling on breastfeeding. Hospitals should become more “baby-friendly,” by taking steps like those recommended by the UNICEF/WHO's Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative;
- Clinicians should ensure that they are trained to properly care for breastfeeding mothers and babies. They should promote breastfeeding to their pregnant patients and make sure that mothers receive the best advice on how to breastfeed;
- Employers should work toward establishing paid maternity leave and high-quality lactation support programs. Employers should expand the use of programs that allow nursing mothers to have their babies close by so they can feed them during the day. They should also provide women with break time and private space to express breast milk; and
- Families should give mothers the support and encouragement they need to breastfeed.

The Academy's Expert Panel on Breastfeeding is charged with influencing policy and shaping the future of breastfeeding in the United States. AAN's participation at the landmark event complements its previous endeavors related to advancing breastfeeding issues, including sponsorship of the United States Breastfeeding Committee's (USBC) document, “[Breastfeeding: A Vision for the Future](#).” Spatz serves as the official representative of AAN to USBC and Maureen Groer, PhD, RN, FAAN serves as the alternate delegate.

Since 2007, Spatz has submitted significant testimony, delivered presentations, and authored editorials and journal articles for *Breastfeeding Medicine*, *Nursing Outlook* and *The Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*.

“Dr. Spatz exemplifies the vast knowledge of our expert panel leaders who lead critical field-related conversations,” said AAN Chief Executive Officer Cheryl G. Sullivan, MSES. “Breastfeeding is proven to decrease future health risks in infants, and we applaud the steps taken by the Surgeon General to build awareness and improve the nation’s health.”

To order printed copies of the Surgeon General’s “Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding” and other materials, please call 1-800-CDC-INFO or email [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov) and reference the publication title.

For more information on the Academy’s Expert Panel on Breastfeeding, email [fsampson@aannet.org](mailto:fsampson@aannet.org) or visit <http://www.aannet.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3292>.

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