

Dear Ms. Linda Boisvert,
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It has come to my attention that the national conference of the Canadian Association of Neonatal Nurses is co-sponsored by two infant formula manufacturers, Mead Johnson and Abbott.

Health professionals and their associations play an essential role in guiding infant and young child feeding practices, this includes the important work of facilitating breastfeeding as the norm for optimal infant and young child health and development.

The use of the health care system, including professional associations by the infant formula manufacturers, Mead Johnson and Abbott as promotional channels for their products and their brands creates conflicts of interest for those working with mothers and infants.

The World Health Organization's *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*, adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2002, and by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2002, calls for implementing programmes on infant and young child feeding to be consistent with accepted principles for avoiding conflict of interest.

The global health body has passed several World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions. Resolution 49.15 of 1996, calls upon governments to ensure that that:

“financial support for professionals working in infant and young child health does not create conflicts of interest, especially with regard to the WHO UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative “.

Resolution 58.32, further urges that

“to ensure that financial support and other incentives for programmes and health professionals working in infant and young child health do not create conflict of interest”;

Clearly the World Health Organization is requesting that education,

program implementation, research and professional development on infant and young child health and nutrition be undistorted by commercial influence.

Hence sponsorship by baby food manufacturing companies of any research, conferences, seminars, workshops or other scientific meetings that deal with any aspect of infant and young child health and nutrition leads to potential conflict of interest.

I therefore urge the CANN to fully support maternal and infant health and rescind the sponsorships by Mead Johnson and Abbott to be in compliance with the World Health Organization's Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, the relevant WHA resolutions and the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding.

Canada's mothers and babies deserve your independent support.