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## **BMC awarded W.K. Kellogg grant to increase breastfeeding rates in several southern states**

(Boston) -- In an effort to increase breastfeeding rates and improve maternal/infant care in communities in Mississippi, New Orleans and Southern Texas, Boston Medical Center (BMC) was recently awarded a three-year, \$2.125 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for the CHAMPS (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) program.

Under the direction of Anne Merewood PhD, MPH, IBCLC, director of the Breastfeeding Center at BMC, the grant will bring together breastfeeding experts from all over the nation to work with 25 targeted hospitals. The goal will be to improve maternity care practices at all sites and to have at least 10 of the hospitals become Baby-Friendly designated by the end of the project. To earn the distinction of Baby-Friendly, a hospital must meet the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding: hospital-based criteria set by the World Health Organization, which support breast feeding practice, such as ensuring that infants are placed skin to skin with their mothers for the first hour of life.

In the communities surrounding those hospitals, CHAMPS will work in prenatal and postpartum settings to improve care for pregnant women and babies. A key partner in the project is ROSE (Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere), a community-oriented organization focused on increasing breastfeeding rates among African American women. ROSE will work to establish 25 B-LINKS (Breastfeeding League in a Kindred Setting) programs. These mother-to-mother support groups consist of open forum discussions conducted by experienced and qualified breastfeeding mothers in an informal setting.

"It is exciting to embark on such a big project that has the potential to change lives of so many families in disadvantaged settings," said Merewood who is also an associate professor of pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine.

Merewood has worked extensively on research and implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative ever since BMC became Baby-Friendly in 1999. BMC was the first hospital in Massachusetts to become Baby-Friendly. Most recently, Merewood has worked on Baby-Friendly initiatives in New Jersey and Oklahoma, as well as for the National Institute for Children's Health Quality's Best Fed Beginnings project and with Indian Health Service hospitals across the United States.

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### **About BMC**

Boston Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit, 496-bed, academic medical center that is the primary teaching affiliate of Boston University School of Medicine. It is the largest and busiest provider of trauma and emergency services in New England. Committed to providing high-quality health care to all, the hospital offers a full spectrum of pediatric and adult care services including primary and family medicine and advanced specialty care with an emphasis on community-based care. Boston Medical Center offers specialized care for complex health problems and is a leading research institution.

Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine are partners in the Boston HealthNet – 15 community health centers focused on providing exceptional health care to residents of Boston. For more information, please visit <http://www.bmc.org>

### **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Mich., and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit <http://www.wkkf.org>.



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