

Caroline Flint MP,  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health  
Department of Health,  
79 Whitehall  
London, SW1 2NS

7th February 2006

Dear Caroline,

**Concerns about infant formulas containing partially hydrolysed proteins.**

On behalf of the Baby Feeding Law Group, an ad-hoc group representing 15 leading health professional and voluntary organizations working to bring UK and EU legislation into line with the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent relevant Resolutions, we are writing to follow up from our letter to Hazel Blears in August 2002 (enclosed) and to bring to your attention new revelations about the research used to support the claims for formulas containing hydrolysed proteins.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reports <sup>1</sup>, screened on 3 consecutive nights last week, indicate that the research conducted by Dr R Chandra, and used extensively by Nestlé in support of its marketing of *Nan HA 1* and *2* in the UK, is fraudulent. The British Medical Journal was instrumental in exposing the flaws in the research and the complete lack of raw data to support the claims made by Dr Chandra. Other companies have also cited Chandra's work.

The matter was discussed at the BFLG meeting today and members unanimously called for these products to be withdrawn from the UK market, at least until the research base for this whole group of products is reviewed, and until the products have been completely relabelled and the claims removed. In view of the evidence from the USA where HA and Hypoallergenic claims are now banned, we believe these claims are misleading and dangerous and have no legal basis in European and UK legislation.

We are also concerned that multi-centre trials, funded by the Dutch company, NUMICO, are about to start in several UK hospitals. We understand that the study was refused permission in the Netherlands and the BFLG is concerned about the ethics of these trials and the NHS duty of care.

We look forward to your response to these urgent concerns

Yours sincerely on behalf of the Group:

Victoria Carne, Midwives Information and Resource Service (MIDIRS)  
Gill Barber, The Royal College of Nursing (RCN)  
Obi Amadi, Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association (CPHVA)  
Janet Fyle, Royal College of Midwives (RCM)  
Phyll Buchanan, The Breastfeeding Network (BFN)  
Phoebe Tait, La Leche League GB (LLLGB)  
Rosemary Dodds and Patricia Wise, National Childbirth Trust (NCT)  
Penelope Samuel, Association of Radical Midwives (ARM)  
Patti Rundall, Baby Milk Action.  
Beverley Beech, Association for Improvement in the Maternity Services (AIMS)  
Ilana King and Pam Lacey, Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM)  
Kath Dalmeny, The Food Commission  
Sue Ashmore, UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative  
Viv Sleeman, Lactation Consultants of Great Britain (LCGB)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/national/news/chandra/>



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**Member organisations:** Association of Breastfeeding Mothers - Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services - Association of Radical Midwives - Baby Milk Action - Breastfeeding Network - Food Commission - Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association - Lactation Consultants of Great Britain - La Leche League (GB) - Midwives Information and Resource Service - National Childbirth Trust - Royal College of Midwives - Royal College of Nursing - Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health - Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative.

## Baby Feeding Law Group Members. January 2006

- 1 **The Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM)** is a membership-based Charity, founded in 1979, with 400 breastfeeding counsellors providing mother-to-mother support to women. ABM takes no money from infant feeding companies.
- 2 **The Association for Improvement in the Maternity Services (AIMS)** is a pressure group, with 730 members which was founded in 1960. AIMS gives information and advice about all aspects of maternity care, including parents' rights, choices, technological interventions, normal childbirth and complaints procedures.
- 3 **The Association of Radical Midwives (ARM)** is a charity which provides a support for its 1,400 members who are midwives, student midwives and others in the UK committed to improving the maternity care provided by the NHS and who believe that all women have the right to a service tailored more closely to their needs. The ARM is funded by membership fees and takes no money from the baby feeding industry.
- 4 **Baby Milk Action** is a membership-based organization of over 2000 members which aims to save lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. It works within the European and global network, the International Baby Food Action Network, to strengthen independent, transparent and effective controls on the marketing of the baby feeding industry. IBFAN has over 200 citizens groups in more than 100 countries, including nearly all EU Member states. It takes no money from the infant feeding industry.
- 5 **The Breastfeeding Network (BFN)** is a mother-to-mother support and membership organisation with 725 members. BFN takes no money from the infant feeding industry.
- 6 **The Food Commission** is an independent national non-profit organization, campaigning for the right to safe, wholesome food. It is largely funded by public subscriptions and donations and takes no subsidy from the government or food industry. Its flagship publication, The Food Magazine, has a readership of 10,000.
- 7 **The Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA)** represents its 21,000 members who are community health professionals.
- 8 **Lactation Consultants of Great Britain (LCGB)** represents over 100 Lactation consultants in Great Britain.
- 9 **La Leche League GB** is part of an international organisation that provides information and support to breastfeeding mothers, through mother-to-mother support. LLL GB has 749 mothering members, 1242 peer counsellor members and 97 health professional members. LLLGB does not accept funding from producers of infant formula or any other product or service which might undermine breastfeeding or devalue the importance of nurturing.
- 10 **Midwives Information and Resource Service (MIDIRS)** is an educational charity set up in 1985 which in 2004, distributed 54,000 copies of its Midwifery Digest to midwives and other health professionals, giving an overview of key midwifery and medical research. Its Enquiry Service provides access to the MIDIRS database of over 110,000 articles, with over 500 new references added each month to this valuable resource. Currently MIDIRS processes over 750,000 enquiry requests per annum from health professionals wishing to gain access to this information. The MIDIRS Informed Choice Initiative was launched in 1996 and to date over 1.4 million leaflets have been used by health professionals and prospective parents.
- 11 **The National Childbirth Trust (NCT)** is a membership-based charity, established 49 years ago, and with currently over 64,000 members in the UK and a network of over 350 local branches. NCT provides a range of services for parents including antenatal classes, postnatal discussion groups, breastfeeding counselling which are available to members and non-members alike. The NCT takes no funding from formula companies.
- 12 **The Royal College of Midwives (RCM)** is the only trade union and professional organisation run by midwives for midwives. It is the voice of midwifery, providing excellence in professional leadership, education, influence and representation for and on behalf of midwives. The RCM has a membership of 37,000.
- 13 **The Royal College of Nursing and the RCN Midwifery Society** is the leading professional union for nursing, safeguarding the interests of patients and nursing by lobbying government and other professional bodies to ensure that the views of the profession are heard where it counts. The RCN is a member-led organisation of around 370,000 nurses and midwives and is signatory to WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Standards.'
- 14 **The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)** has about 7,000 members. The College aims to advance the art and science of paediatrics, improve standards of medical care to children, and to educate and examine doctors in paediatrics. The College also provides information to the public on children's health care.
- 15 **The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFHI)** is a global programme of UNICEF and the World Health Organisation which works with the health services to improve practice in the support of breastfeeding. In the UK, the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative is commissioned by various parts of the health service to provide advice, support, education, networking, assessment and accreditation.

