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August 7, 2002

**To: The Hon. Judith Erola  
Board of Directors Chairperson  
Canadian Institute for Child Health**

Ms. Erola,

On behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association, I am writing to express our concerns regarding the ongoing sponsorship of the Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH) by Nestle.

The Ontario Public Health Association is a provincial voluntary association of individuals and constituent societies from various sectors and disciplines in Ontario who promote the health of the public. One of our priorities is the promotion of child health and the importance of breastfeeding to the health and well being of children. To this end, OPHA supports the World Health Organization Code on the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981).

The Summary of the WHO Code states under point 14:

"The interest of manufacturers may conflict with those of breastfeeding mothers and their children. Sponsorship or other financial assistance from the infant feeding industry may interfere with professionals' unequivocal support for The Baby Friendly Initiative and breastfeeding." (Protecting Infant Health: A Health Workers Guide to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes 8th ed.)

We believe that the association between CICH and Nestle can be interpreted as an endorsement of its marketing practices and may be used as such.

In your discussions with Jean Samuel, Chair of the OPHA Breastfeeding Workgroup, you stated that you "will continue to support baby friendly hospitals".

In order for a hospital to be accredited as Baby-Friendly they are required to adhere to the WHO Code and all subsequent resolutions. This also applies to community health services seeking Baby-Friendly designation. The infant formula industry has demonstrated a persistent lack of willingness to abide by

the WHO Code. While CICH is not a hospital or community health service it can be Baby-Friendly in spirit by supporting the WHO Code and refusing money from the infant formula industry.

Sincerely,

Connie Uetrecht  
President, OPHA Board of Directors