



## **World's Leading Breastfeeding Advocate Urges Health Professionals to Be Honest with Mums**

"Is breastfeeding always natural?" is a question that one of the world's most influential breastfeeding experts answered at Medela's 12<sup>th</sup> International Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium earlier this month. Her honesty was truly inspiring and was met with unanimous praise from the audience.

Yes, it is natural, but it does not always come naturally.

"It is hard work," explained Prof Diane Spatz, an award winning Professor of Perinatal Nursing. She continued, "Even a mother with a strong prenatal desire to breastfeed might face challenges that threaten her breastfeeding experience."

All health professionals have a responsibility not only to have an understanding of the basic anatomy of the breast and a good knowledge base on how breastmilk benefits an infant, but also a duty to speak truthfully to mums about breastfeeding.

Spatz spoke of the need to empower women to breastfeed and how important it is to share information. Research shows if women and their families understand why and how breastfeeding is essential, it will help them through the challenges. If parents are making informed decisions it will go some way to start increasing global breastfeeding rates.

It has been reported that only 5%<sup>i</sup> of women "might" be physiologically incapable of breastfeeding, the rest just don't get the support they need to get off to the right start and the consequences impact their entire breastfeeding journey. Therefore with 95% of women seemingly able to breastfeed, the dire breastfeeding rates urgently need to be addressed, and the support available to breastfeeding mothers around the world needs to increase.

The global breastfeeding community must stop referring to 'successful' breastfeeding, "if we talk about success," Spatz explained 'we are also talking about failure.' Breastfeeding families should work with goals, monthly, weekly or even daily goals to support them.

Prof Spatz's commanding presentation was met with an overwhelming reception from the audience of more than 450 healthcare professionals from around the world. Her commitment to increasing breastfeeding rates on a global scale is very clear and her work to date is truly making a difference evidenced by her Lifetime Achievement Award in the USA and her testimony which has helped to shape the US Surgeon General's National Breastfeeding Call to Action.

## Notes to Editors

### About Medela:

Founded in 1961 by Olle Larsson and headquartered in Switzerland, Medela today is led by his son Michael Larsson. Medela concentrates on two business units: "Human Milk", the leader in the development and production of breast milk feeding products and solutions, and "Healthcare", which engineers and manufactures highly innovative medical vacuum technology solutions. Medela conducts basic research in partnership with leading scientists, medical professionals and universities, and uses the research results in the development of its breastfeeding products and solutions. Medela has 18 subsidiaries in Europe, North America and Asia, and together with independent partners distributes its products in more than 100 countries. The company employs more than 1,800 staff worldwide, 440 of whom are located in the Canton of Zug, Switzerland.

### Prof Diane Spatz:

Prof Spatz Diane L. Spatz, PhD, RN-BC, FAAN educates and consults in the breastfeeding care of families, including special prenatal and post-delivery education for mothers with infants diagnosed with complex surgical and non-surgical anomalies. She has developed a DVD on skin-to-skin transfer of the ventilated infant, as well as the DVD – The Power of Pumping – both used in hospitals worldwide. A revered mentor, she involves students in all of her research projects.

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<sup>i</sup> Neifert (2001) **PREVENTION OF BREASTFEEDING TRAGEDIES**, Paediatric Clinics of North America