La Leche League Canada

Supporting breastfeeding families since 1961

www.LLLC.ca

November 26, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: La Leche League Canada condemns participation in Nestle Nutrition Institute Workshop, reaffirms commitment to the International Code

La Leche League Canada (LLLC) is registered Canadian charity providing breastfeeding peer counselling support to families across Canada for almost 60 years. Over 400 volunteer group Leaders provide support and information to 30,000 Canadians annually through in-person meetings, phone, email and social media support as well as outreach to community and health care professionals.

The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and all subsequent WHA resolutions (the Code) form an important pillar of LLLC's commitment to Canadian families with the aim of creating an environment where each parent can make informed decisions without the inappropriate influence of commercial interests. On November 1 2017, the LLLC Board reiterated and strengthened our commitment to upholding the Code by passing the following amendment to the policy "Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes" (section 2.1) :

> *"LLLC expressly endorses the aim, intent and letter of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions (the Code). LLLC shall not accept funding in any form or participate in activities, events or projects funded or sponsored by any entity that manufactures or distributes products covered by the Code or any entity that is not at arm's length from any entity who manufactures or distributes products covered by the Code. Leaders shall avoid all activities that create a conflict of interest in respect of the Code."*

From October 30 to November 1 2017, the Nestle Nutrition Institute held the 90th Nestle Nutrition Institute Workshop in Switzerland at which several prominent researchers and clinicians presented. Nestle Nutrition is listed as a wholly owned subsidiary of Nestle S.A. in the company's December 31 2016 report. The presenters included two individuals, Dr. Ruth Lawrence and Dr. Paula Meier, who sit on the La Leche League International (LLLI) Health Advisory Council (HAC). The conference was livestreamed and archived with open access on the internet and also promoted via social media channels. Following this, LLLC requested that the LLLI request the resignation of the two HAC members who spoke at the Nestle event and review its policies regarding HAC membership. Similar calls came from other LLL entities and a public petition to LLLI.

In an internal response, LLLI has declined to request the resignations requested, citing lack of clarity in policies and that they do not consider speaking a breach of obligations under the Code. LLLC has consulted with both internal and external experts on the Code and concludes that this is an inaccurate representation of the requirements of the Code and seriously undermines the Code and the reputation of LLL globally, including our own.

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Based upon the analysis of LLLC's advisors:

- As a fully-owned subsidiary sharing the "Nestle" name, Nestle Nutrition cannot be considered at arm's length to Nestle S.A., whose marketing of products covered by the Code is among the most egregiously predatory in the industry

- The Nestle Nutrition Institute 90Th Workshop is a violation of the Code under Article 7.2 as well as clarified in WHA Resolution 69.9, and under Article 5.1 due to the public streaming and social media promotion of the event

- Speakers at the event breached their obligations under the Code, regardless of their specific credentials, amount of compensation received and the content of their presentations (Article 7 and WHA Resolutions 47.5, 49.15, 58.32, 61.20, 65.60 and 69.9 with regard to conflict of interest)

La Leche League has supported the Code since its very inception and LLLC intends to continue that tradition. While LLLC cannot compel LLLI to review this decision, we wish to clearly communicate that LLLC is committed to upholding the aim, spirit and letter of the Code. It is unacceptable for LLLI to undermine the Code within LLL while suggesting that it supports the Code in public. Therefore, on November 23 2017, LLLC's Board agreed to following:

- LLLC Leaders are instructed to rely upon LLLC internal advisors on questions of Code and conflict of interest

- LLLI resources should no longer be assumed to be aligned to LLLC's position on the Code. LLLC Leaders should assess the resources individually in the same way that any external resources are assessed. Resources from other LLL entities who have upheld their commitment to the Code, such as LLL USA, LLL Europe and LLL Great Britain, can continue to be used as internal resources

- Funds will be allocated to the training of LLLC Leaders on the Code and the ethical obligations of LLLC under the Code

We are making this statement publically as an extraordinary step. La Leche League traditionally keeps our internal conflicts well hidden from public view so as not to interfere with our joint mission of helping families. No matter what our disagreements are, we always agree that helping families is our common purpose.

This situation and the subsequent responses from LLLI are so at odds with our mission and vision that we are compelled to clarify publically that we do not agree. Every day, in communities across Canada, our volunteers roll up their sleeves to raise funds, run events and support families while abiding by the Code. It's not easy in our highly commercialized world, with few regulatory protections and a vast imbalance of resources for the promotion and protection of breastfeeding. We are behind our volunteers and LLL's 40 year long commitment to the protection of breastfeeding under the Code.

LLLC looks forward to working together with those entities and organizations who can say and show the same commitment, while our volunteers Leaders focus on our mission in communities across Canada. Any questions for LLLC may be directed to board@lllc.ca.