

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7600, June 02, 1994]

AN ACT PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO ALL GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS WITH ROOMING-IN AND BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as "The Rooming-In and Breastfeeding Act of 1992".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State adopts rooming-in as a national policy to encourage, protect and support the practice of breastfeeding. It shall create an environment where basic physical, emotional, antipsychological needs of mothers and infants are fulfilled through the practice of rooming-in and breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding has distinct advantages which benefit the infant and the mother, including the hospital and the country that adopt its practice. It is the first preventive health measure that can be given to the child at birth. It also enhances mother-infant relationship.

Furthermore, the practice of breastfeeding could save the country valuable foreign exchange that may be otherwise be used for milk importation.

Breastmilk is the best food since it contains essential nutrients completely suitable for the infant's needs. It is also nature's first immunization, enabling the infant to fight potential serious infection. It contains growth factors that enhance the maturation of an infant's organ systems.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act, the following definitions are adopted:

- a) Age of gestation - the length of time the fetus is inside the mother's womb.
- b) Bottlefeeding - the method of feeding an infant using a bottle with artificial nipples, the contents of which can be any type of fluid.
- c) Breastfeeding - the method of feeding an infant directly from the human breast.
- d) Breastmilk - the human milk from a mother.
- e) Expressed breastmilk - the human milk which has been extracted from the breast by hand or by breast pump. It can be fed to an infant using a dropper, a nasogastric tube, a cup and spoon, or a bottle.
- f) Formula feeding - the feeding of a newborn with infant formula usually by bottlefeeding. It is also called artificial feeding.

- g) Health institutions - are hospitals, health infirmaries, health centers, lying-in centers, or puericulture centers with obstetrical and pediatric services.
- h) Health personnel - are professionals and workers who manage and/or administer the entire operations of health institutions and/or who are involved in providing maternal and child health services.
- i) Infant - a child within zero (0) to twelve months (12) months of age.
- j) Infant formula - the breastmilk substitute formulated industrially in accordance with applicable Codex Alimentarius standards, to satisfy the normal nutritional requirements of infants up to six (6) months of age, and adopted to their physiological characteristics.
- k) Lactation management - the general care of a mother-infant nursing couple during the mother's prenatal, immediate postpartum and postnatal periods. It deals with educating and providing knowledge and information to pregnant and lactating mothers on the advantages of breastfeeding, the physiology of lactation, the establishment and maintenance of lactation, the proper care of the breasts and nipples, and such other matters that would contribute to successful breastfeeding.
- l) Low birth weight infant - a newborn weighing less than two thousand five hundred (2,500) grams at birth.
- m) Mother's milk - the breastmilk from the newborn's own mother.
- n) Rooming-in - the practice of placing the newborn in the same room as the mother right after delivery up to discharge to facilitate mother-infant bonding and to initiate breastfeeding. The infant may either share the mother's bed or be placed in a crib beside the mother.
- o) Seriously ill mothers - are those who are: with severe infections; in shock, in severe cardiac or respiratory distress; or dying; or those with other conditions that may be determined by the attending physician as serious.
- p) Wet-nursing - the feeding of a newborn from another mother's breast when his/her own mother cannot breastfeed.

CHAPTER I

ROOMING-IN AND BREASTFEEDING OF INFANTS

SEC. 4. Applicability. - The provisions in this Chapter shall apply to all private and government health institutions adopting rooming-in and breastfeeding as defined in this Act.

SEC. 5. Normal Spontaneous Deliveries. - The following newborn infants shall be put to the breast of the mother immediately after birth and forthwith roomed-in within thirty (30) minutes:

- a) well infants regardless of age of gestation; and
- b) infants with low birth weights but who can suck.

SEC. 6. Deliveries by Caesarian. - Infants delivered by caesarian section shall be roomed-in and breastfed within three (3) to four (4) hours after birth.