



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



January 2, 2024

The Honorable Chrissy Houlahan
United States House of Representatives
1727 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Stephanie Bice
United States House of Representatives
1223 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Houlahan and Bice,

On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), alongside the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians (ACOP), collectively representing more than 186,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, we write to express our support for the *Access to Donor Milk Act* (H.R.5486). This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would allow states to use Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funding to promote viability and access for donor milk programs, and provide funding for emergency capacity to mitigate shortages during major disaster declared by the President. Enactment of this legislation would allow low-income parents to access donor milk and help to alleviate the pressure of potential infant formula shortages in the future.

In 2022, the United States experienced a severe shortage of infant formula as a result of global supply chain issues and import restrictions, compounded by large-scale product recalls and manufacturing stoppages after the deaths of two infants who had been fed domestically produced infant formula. During the formula shortage, physicians sought to help parents and newborns by recommending alternatives to infant formula, including pasteurized human donor milk. Many physicians found donor milk to be a viable and relatively low-cost intervention – particularly for medically fragile infants – but low-income parents struggled to equitably access donor milk due to supply pressures on donor milk banks and out of pocket costs arising from lack of Medicaid or WIC coverage.

As pediatricians continue to work to ensure the health and wellbeing of patients in the event of a future infant formula shortages, a reliable and equitably accessible supply of donor milk is an important factor in their preparation. Allowing WIC funds to support donor milk procurement in states, and providing funds to provide education to parents and mitigate demand surges will allow states to have the resources necessary to assist pediatricians in providing the best care to their patients.

Again, the AOA and our affiliates offer our support for this essential legislation and stand ready to assist in securing the enactment of the *Access to Donor Milk Act*. If you have any questions or if the AOA can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact John-Michael Villarama, MA, AOA Vice President of Congressional Affairs and Public Policy, at jvillarama@osteopathic.org or (202) 349-8748.

Sincerely,

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President, AOA

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