



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of  
Health and Social Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
Director's Office

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** December 5, 2017

**TO:** Alaskan Health Care Providers

**FROM:** Jay C. Butler, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Social Services  
Director, Division of Public Health

**SUBJECT:** Breastfeeding mothers reporting marijuana use are encouraged to continue breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the optimal feeding choice for most infants and benefits children in many ways, including the protective factor of maternal-infant bonding. The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services recommends provider adherence to published guidelines on infant feeding from nationally recognized experts in the field of maternal and infant health. The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists concur that there is stronger associative evidence of potential adverse health outcomes related to pregnancy and marijuana use than that between marijuana use and breastfeeding. Providers are encouraged to advise mothers who report use of marijuana to:

- stop marijuana use during pregnancy,
- continue to breastfeed while making every effort to reduce the amount of marijuana consumed, whether smoked, vaped or eaten,
- protect children from second-hand marijuana smoke in their home or car, the same way they protect their children from second hand tobacco smoke,
- do not drive a car while under the influence of marijuana with or without your child,
- safely store marijuana and edibles out of reach of children and pets. Remind caregivers to also safely store any marijuana or edibles, and
- have sober, unimpaired child care providers take responsibility for their children whenever they are using any impairing substance, including marijuana.

Please follow this [link](#) to access an order form for requesting supplies of patient handouts with acceptable messages on use of marijuana, alcohol and tobacco, during pregnancy and breastfeeding: Guidance from nationally recognized authorities on the subject are hyperlinked below.

[Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Clinical Protocol #21: Guidelines for Breastfeeding and Substance Use or Substance Use Disorder, Revised 2015](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk](#)

[American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Committee Opinion No.722: Marijuana Use during Pregnancy and Lactation.](#)