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SUWASIRIPAYA

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 Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition

19.4.2010  
 General Circular No: 01-15/2010

- Director General Health Services
- All Deputy Directors General of the Ministry of Health
- All Directors of Ministry of Health
- All Directors of Teaching Hospitals
- All Heads of Decentralized Units and Specialized Campaigns
- All Provincial Directors of Health Services
- All Regional Directors of Health Services
- All Medical Superintendents of Hospitals
- All Deans of the Medical Faculties

**Promotion of Branded Milk Powder within Health Institutions and to the staff of the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition**

It has been brought to my notice by the committee for monitoring violations of the code for promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing designated products, that industry, media and some individual health professionals are using the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition infrastructure and health care providers to promote brands of milk products in contrary to the Sri Lanka code for the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing of designated products, Infant and Young Child Feeding guidelines and nutrition policy of Sri Lanka in the following manner;

- Advertising milk products directly through posters, display of logos, distribution of printed material etc within the health institution premises
- Indirectly advertising where the companies provide free glasses of milk to pregnant mothers (within hospitals and MOH clinics) displaying the logo directly and indirectly

- Sponsoring routine meetings (Perinatal conference, monthly clinical meetings at hospitals and monthly conference of MOH offices)
- Organizing clinical meetings and workshops for the health staff sometimes with company sponsored local or foreign experts at star class hotels and indirectly or directly promoting the brands.
- Offering free samples and gifts with or without company logos to health staff
- Offering /Sponsoring fellowships/study tours to health staff in violation of the Sri Lanka code for promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing of designated products
- And in many other ways

Using government health infrastructure and health staff to advertise branded milk powder and other products either directly or indirectly is highly unethical, illegal and should be prohibited. These practices are detrimental to infant and young child nutrition.

It is the responsibility of the health staff to take every step to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and ensure provision of safe and adequate nutrition to infants and young children according to Sri Lankan policies and guidelines. In order to do so, please ensure that following measures are strictly followed in your Provinces, Districts and Institutions with immediate effect;

- Prohibit the advertisement of branded milk powder/ distribution of free samples/ display of milk food company logos within health institution premises
- Prohibit sponsorship from milk food companies for routine meetings (Perinatal conference, monthly clinical meetings at hospitals and monthly conference of MOH offices etc.)
- Prohibit distribution of any printed material to promote milk powder using health staff or by other means within health institution premises
- Instruct health staff that attending clinical meetings and workshops sponsored by milk food companies even outside health institutions is contrary to Sri Lanka code for promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing of designated products (Refer Article 5 of the Sri Lanka Code for promotion, protection, support of breastfeeding and marketing designated products)

All health personnel should abide by the Sri Lanka code for promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing of designated products, a copy of which is attached herewith. Take steps to make all health personnel in your Provinces, Districts and Institutions aware about the contents of the above code. Violation of the code is an offence under the Consumer Affairs Authority Act. No 9 of 2003.


Any violation of the Sri Lanka code for promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and marketing of designated products should be reported to the Code Monitoring Committee which is chaired by the Secretary Ministry of Health, to the following address;

The Director MCH,  
231, Family Health Bureau,  
De Seram Place, Colombo 10.  
Telephone; 011 2696508/2696677/ 2681309

Email; [fhb.dmch@gmail.com](mailto:fhb.dmch@gmail.com)

Fax; 0112690790

Please bring the contents of this circular to all relevant Consultants and Medical Officers including Medical Officers MCH (MOOMCH) and Medical Officers of Health (MOOH). Further instruct them to bring the contents of this circular to the notice of all relevant health staff.

  
Dr Nihal Jayatilaka  
Acting Secretary Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition

CC;  
Legal officer, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition  
Director General, Consumer Affairs Authority  
President, Sri Lanka College of Administrators  
President, Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians  
President, Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka  
President, Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka  
President, Sri Lanka College of Community Physicians  
President, Sri Lanka College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists  
President Independent Medical Practitioners' Association  
President, College of General Practitioners' Association