



**POSITION STATEMENT OF THE
PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF NEWBORN MEDICINE, INC. (PSNBM) ON THE
CARE OF THE NEWBORNS DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC
July 26, 2021**

The Philippine Society of Newborn Medicine (PSNBM), in accordance with the most current recommendations of the WHO, the UNICEF and the DOH, on the care of the newborn during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic hereby supports the following protocols and procedures:

1. Non-separation of the clinically stable mother (with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 infection) from her newborn, enabling the provision of her “unang yakap” and initiation of breastfeeding within the first 60-90 minutes of life, with strict infection prevention and control (IPC) measures
2. Kangaroo mother care (KMC) for stable premature and low birth weight newborns, as soon as feasible and as long as possible, their COVID-status notwithstanding, with similar IPC measures
3. Rooming in or co-location of stable mother-infant dyads with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection, to reiterate the superiority of continued breastfeeding over the risk of COVID-19 infection, with strict maternal compliance to IPC measures.
4. As current evidence has not established the transmission of SARS COV 2 virus through breastmilk to cause Covid 19 infection in the newborn, and instead, COVID-19 antibodies are found in breastmilk of infected and vaccinated mother, the optimal source of nutrition is direct exclusive breastfeeding. So that if for some reason this is not feasible, due to critical maternal or neonatal illness, it is recommended to assist the mother to express her own milk (MOM), for neonatal nutrition and also establish and maintain her milk production. If MOM is not available, pasteurized donor milk (PDM) should be the source of temporary feeding for the newborn.

We aim to bring all stakeholders together to raise the level of awareness and responsibility to protect, promote and support exclusive breastfeeding, especially in disaster and emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also a call for a multi-disciplinary approach to sustain an enabling environment and protect the mother-baby dyad, against unethical marketing influence of industries that undermine breastfeeding. Health systems and institutional policies should adapt and support these recommendations as these are the best investments for saving lives and improving the health, social and economic development of individuals and nations in this critical time.

References:

1. World Health Organization (WHO) Interim Guidance on the Clinical Management, 25 Jan 2021
2. Unified COVID-19 Algorithms, 21 June 2021
3. Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance on COVID-19 and breastfeeding
4. Department of Health (DOH) Circular No. 2021-0297. Observance of August 2021 as National Breastfeeding Awareness Month with the Theme “Tulong-Tulong sa Pagpapasuso sa First 1000 days.” 13 July 2021
5. World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) 24/06/2020. Publication and resources from organizations related to the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and Breastfeeding.