



How does **H4217** cost health care dollars?

What you should know about **H4217**, "An act relative to maternity patients' rights."

- **By mandating a common marketing practice, the bill creates "rights" for formula companies.** H 4217 requires hospitals to stock samples of formula to give at "mothers' request." Formula companies widely distribute coupons to expectant mothers to redeem at hospitals, giving the impression these products are recommended by hospital staff.
- **Formula marketing in hospitals is bad medicine.** Multiple studies have shown that discharge packs containing formula samples and "educational information" lead breastfeeding mothers to start using formula.
- **We all pay a price when moms stop breastfeeding.** The earlier breastfeeding stops, the higher the risk of many costly chronic diseases: maternal breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease; obesity, diabetes, and infections in offspring. Parents of formula feeding infants have 3 times as many one-day work absences because their children are sick so much more often, hurting our state's economic productivity.
- **Moms who buy formula pay, too.** Formula samples are only name-brands, which cost a family over \$700 a year more than store brands. Formula companies know brand loyalty in infant formula runs high, encouraging families to spend much more on formula than is necessary.
- **H 4217 undermines the rights of maternity patients.** The CDC has found that 60% of mothers do not meet their own breastfeeding goals, and formula marketing samples has been shown to make this even more difficult for moms. All patients have a right to evidence-based medical care, free from intrusion of commercial interests.
- **Massachusetts health care providers don't want to market formula.** Over 25 Massachusetts hospitals have banned hospital-based formula marketing, citing ethical concerns. Opponents of hospital-based formula marketing include all major medical organizations in the state, including local chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetrician and Gynecology, and the Massachusetts Medical Society.
- **Don't be duped by pro-breastfeeding language in H 4217.** The formula industry backed this legislation when it was introduced in 2007. Why? The only way to sell more formula is to sell less breastfeeding. This bill would help industry profits, at the expense of mothers, babies, and taxpayers.

Hospitals should market health and nothing else.

