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For Immediate Release

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ABBOTT LABORATORIES, WORKING MOTHER MEDIA JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING

- *Program aims to reduce primary barrier to extended breastfeeding* –

PHOENIX, Ariz., Feb. 20, 2004 – Abbott Laboratories' Ross Products Division today announced the launch of a major new program, *Business Backs Breastfeeding*[™], designed to help companies more effectively support mothers who continue to breastfeed after returning to work. Partnering with *Working Mother* magazine, Abbott kicked off the program at the annual Alliance for Work/Life Progress conference in Phoenix.

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The turnkey program, *Business Backs Breastfeeding: A Flexible Workplace Program for Breastfeeding Mothers™*, provides instructions, tips and template materials to help employers support extended breastfeeding. The program is based on a model that has proven to increase breastfeeding rates by as much as 30 percentage points. Key elements of the how-to program include recommendations for implementing "mother-friendly" workplace policies; ensuring access to a secure, comfortable, clean and private space to pump breast milk; and enabling women to integrate pumping breaks into their work schedules.

"As an infant nutrition company, our goal is to help ensure optimal nutrition for infants, whether mothers choose breastfeeding, infant formula or a combination of both," said Susan May, M.D., F.A.A.P., director of medical communications at Abbott's Ross Products Division and clinical associate professor of pediatrics at The Ohio State University. "Breastfeeding is the gold standard for infant nutrition, but returning to work is a primary barrier to extended breastfeeding. Clearly, more can be done to support breastfeeding moms in the workplace. We are partnering with *Working Mother* to help employers understand that both businesses and employees benefit from workplace lactation programs."

"Women with infants and children are one of the most important segments of the U.S. workforce," said Carol Evans, president and CEO of Working Mother Media. "Workplace programs for breastfeeding moms help attract and retain employees, while at the same time providing real health benefits for women and infants. *Working Mother* is proud to partner with Abbott, a premier company for working mothers, in encouraging employers to do more to support a mother's choice to continue to breastfeed when she returns to work."

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Joining Ross Products and *Working Mother* magazine in promoting the workplace lactation program is the *Families and Work Institute* (FWI), a leading nonprofit research center focused on the changing workforce and changing families. FWI will help distribute *Business Backs Breastfeeding* to its Corporate Leadership Circle and the more than 600 other companies it works with.

"This is a program that benefits companies, employees and babies," said Ellen Galinsky, president of the *Families and Work Institute*. "It is clearly a win-win for all involved."

U.S. breastfeeding rates are continuing to rise, following a trend established in the 1990s. However, the duration of breastfeeding remains a challenge – especially among women who work outside the home. Women who work full-time start breastfeeding at virtually the same rate as all mothers – 69 percent, compared to 70.1 percent. But by the time their infants are six months old, breastfeeding rates for full-time working moms drop about 25 percent below those of mothers who do not work outside the home.

Abbott is promoting *Business Backs Breastfeeding* through a national business-to-business campaign highlighting the employer benefits of extended breastfeeding – including lower health care costs, reduced absenteeism and heightened employee loyalty and productivity. Abbott will make the program available at no charge to business, health, and work/life organizations and their members, as well as government agencies and women's and children's advocacy groups. Abbott also will work with human resources and work/life professionals to encourage implementation of the program in their workplaces. The *Business Backs Breastfeeding* program can be downloaded at www.ross.com.

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Working Mother magazine is using *Business Backs Breastfeeding* to underscore that workplace lactation programs are a critical element in the work/life arena, further emphasizing the importance of creating beneficial, productive work environments for all working mothers.

Business Backs Breastfeeding was developed in consultation with lactation experts who have implemented similar programs in a variety of businesses. The program also was reviewed by a panel of experts from the fields of medicine, infant nutrition and lactation consulting, all members of the Ross Breastfeeding Advisory Board.

About *Working Mother*

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2004, *Working Mother* magazine reaches nearly 3 million readers and is the only national magazine for career-committed mothers. Its 18-year signature initiative, 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers, is a benchmark for work/life practices in corporate America. The magazine is part of Working Mother Media (WMM), which also owns the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), *NAFE Magazine*, and the annual 100 Best Companies WorkLife Congress. In 2003, WMM published its first annual list of the Best Companies for Women of Color.

About Abbott's Ross Products Division

As a world nutrition leader, Abbott's Ross Products Division is committed to helping people of all ages meet their nutritional needs. Abbott promotes breastfeeding as the best source of infant nutrition. For mothers who cannot or choose not to breastfeed – or who wish to supplement breastfeeding – Abbott offers a broad line of infant formulas including Similac Advance[®], Isomil Advance[®] and NeoSure Advance[®].

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Additionally, Abbott's Ross Products Division pioneered the market for adult nutritionals more than three decades ago. Abbott's adult nutritional family of products includes Ensure[®], Glucerna[®] and ZonePerfect[™]. For more information about Ross Products, visit www.ross.com.

About Abbott Laboratories

Abbott Laboratories is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals, nutritionals and medical products, including devices and diagnostics. The company employs more than 70,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries. Abbott ranked in the top 10 of the *100 Best Companies for Working Mothers* in 2003.

Abbott's news releases and other information are available on the company's Web site at www.abbott.com.

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