ated breast-feeding when their infants

#### POLICY æ PRACTICE

Mass. Considers Retail Clinic Rules Massachusetts' Public Health Council is considering rules that would limit the scope of retail medical clinics in the state. The proposal is in response to a request by CVS Corp. to open 20-30 of its MinuteClinics in the Boston area beginning this fall. Under the health council's proposal, applicants would need to state what services they intend to provide; would be required to develop policies that limit the number of times each patient could receive care there; and would have to refer patients without a primary care physician

# to one in the area who is accepting new

patients.

## **Publix to Offer Free Antibiotics**

Publix Super Markets will offer 14-day prescriptions of seven oral antibiotics free of charge at its 684 pharmacy locations, the Lakeland, Fla.-based store chain announced. The antibiotics included in the program-amoxicillin, cephalexin, sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (SMZ-TMP), ciprofloxacin (excluding Cipro XR), penicillin VK, ampicillin, and erythromycin (excluding Ery-Tab)—account for almost 50% of the generic prescriptions filled for adolescents and children at Publix, the company said. There is no limit to the number of free prescriptions, which are available to patients with prescription drug coverage as well, the store chain said.

#### **Initial Breast-Feeding Rates Rise**

More women are initiating breast-feeding, but the percentage of those who breastfeed exclusively at 3 months is below the national goal of 60%, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from 2004 (the most current available) show that 74% of women initi-



**Shire** 

were born, but only 31% were breastfeeding exclusively at 3 months. By 6 months, only 11% of mothers were exclusively breast-feeding, compared with the national target of 25%. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breast-feeding for the first 6 months of life with a continuation of breast-feeding for the first year and beyond as other foods are introduced. Racial and ethnic disparities also were found. The CDC found that black infants had the lowest rates of exclusive breast-feeding through 3 months with just 20% of mothers continuing to exclusively breast-feed. The report was published in the Aug. 3 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

### **Counseling Lowers Cholesterol**

Regularly counseling families and children about diets low in saturated fats reduces blood cholesterol levels in children up to age 14 years without affecting normal physical development, according to a study in the August issue of Circulation. Finnish researchers compared 540 children assigned to a dietary counseling group, beginning at age 7 months, with 522 who did not get special diet advice. Families in the counseling group received individualized diet counseling from a nutritionist at 1- to 3-month intervals until the child reached 2 years, and then twice a year thereafter. At age 14 years, the dietary group had a small but statistically significantly lower median cholesterol level. The counseled children also had diets consistently lower in fat and saturated fat, and higher in protein and carbohydrates than did those who received no dietary advice alone.

#### Panel to Meet on Cough Medicines

The Food and Drug Administration's Nonprescription Drugs Advisory Committee will meet Oct. 18-19 to consider additional warnings on the use of over-the-counter cold and cough medicines in children. In August, the FDA warned about the use of these products, especially in very young children. In higher-than-normal doses, cough and cold medicines can lead to arrhythmia, and also have been associated with high blood pressure and stroke. The medications should never be given to children under 2 years, unless approved by a physician, the agency said, adding that children should never be given cold and cough medicines packaged for adults, and that parents should closely follow dosage instructions.

### **Bill Urged on Food Allergies**

Back-to-school time is particularly worrisome for the 2.2 million school-aged children with food allergies, along with their parents, according to proponents of legislation that would call on the federal government to establish voluntary national guidelines for managing students with such allergies. Some schools are well prepared to deal with food allergy issues, while others are not, said Anne Munoz-Furlong, founder and CEO of the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network. "Children with food allergy, and their parents, always have to be on guard to prevent a reaction," she said.