Evidence Based Approaches to Preventing Chronic Disease: Action Plans & Implementation

Business Case for Breastfeeding

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Stephanie Sosnowski
ssosnowski@misn-ny.org
845-928-7448 ext. 301
Maternal-Infant Services Network
www.misn-ny.org
Women in the Workforce

2012 data from U.S. Department of Labor:

- 57 percent of women with infants were employed.
- Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. workforce.
Women in the Workforce

- Working full time outside the home is related to shorter breastfeeding duration.

- Low-income women more likely to return to work earlier to jobs that make it more challenging to breastfeed.
Barriers to Breastfeeding for Working Mothers & Disparities: Low Income, Women of Color, Women with Disabilities
Where are these moms working?

- Hourly wage earners
- Retail stores
- Mom and Pop stores
- Small businesses
- Child care centers
- Hairdressers
- Home health aids
- Farmworkers
Mothers Need Support

- Home
- School
- Community
- Work
Support
Who is in your community?

- WIC
- La Leche League
- Hospital-based support groups
- Baby Café ®
- Perinatal Network
- On-line groups
Low Hanging Fruit
Beginning a Lactation Support Program in Your Company

- Establish as part of company health benefit services
- House within the wellness division
- Convene a task force with key company stakeholders to identify needs and solutions
- Gain assistance from community resources
- Promote the program with all employees, supervisors, and co-workers to gain buy-in and support
Who Can Help

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs)
- Health professionals from hospitals or doctor’s offices
- Local breastfeeding coalitions
- WIC Program
- La Leche League
- Community groups
The Business Case for Breastfeeding

~ supporting breastfeeding employees makes good business sense ~

Research has definitively established that breastfeeding is the ideal way to feed babies. Children who are not breastfed are sick more often, have more chronic health problems, and are more likely to be abused.

Real benefits ~
Supporting breastfeeding mothers in the workplace benefits your business:

- Better retention of experienced employees
- Less absenteeism by parents of breastfed children
- Lower health care costs
- More productivity in the workplace

Case study ~
CIGNA Corporation, Philadelphia, PA, a global health services company with 40,000 employees, implemented a comprehensive breastfeeding support program to eliminate barriers for women choosing to work and continue breastfeeding.

Program impacts:
- Annual savings of $240,000 in health care expenses for breastfeeding mothers and their children
- 77% reduction in absenteeism due to infant illness resulting in annual savings of $65,000
- Lower pharmacy costs due to 62% fewer prescriptions

Simple solution ~
Supporting breastfeeding mothers in the workplace requires few resources:

- Privacy to express milk
  - By keeping pumping areas separate, women can maintain their privacy while expressing.
  - Baby can be left in a car seat nearby, and bottles can be chilled in the refrigerator.
- Flexible breaks
  - Breastfeeding women must express milk every 3 hours to maintain their milk supply.
  - For most women, this takes about 15-20 minutes to pump.
- Education
  - Gaining employee knowledge about breastfeeding can help employees transition back to work faster.
  - Access a lactation consultant can help mothers maintain breastfeeding after returning to work.
- Support
  - Work place policies and practices that enable women to easily return to work and breastfeed show all employees the breastfeeding is valued.

Healthy families ➔ satisfied, productive employees
New York State Labor Law requires employers to provide time and place for breastfeeding employees to express breast milk

~ Section 260C
The BUSINESS CASE for BREASTFEEDING

STEPS FOR CREATING A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKSITE
The Business Case for Breastfeeding

- Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite
  - www.hrsa.gov
  - 1-888-Ask-HRSA
  - Publications can be downloaded
Making It Work Toolkit

www.breastfeedingpartners.org
Supporting Breastfeeding is WIN-WIN for Companies and Employees
A Lactation Program Gives Your Company Bottom Line Benefits
Impact on Children in Daycare

Health impact is even greater on infants enrolled in daycare centers

- Daycare attendance is associated with double the odds of needing antibiotic therapy
- Infants breastfed at least 4 months significantly decreased those odds
- Protective effect of breastfeeding on children in daycare persists well into child’s second year of life
Impact on Mothers

- Faster recovery from pregnancy and childbirth
- Lower risk of breast cancer
- Lower risk of osteoporosis
- Satisfaction she is giving her baby the best start in life possible
Employer Benefits

- Lower Health Care Costs
- Lower Turnover Rates
- Lower Absenteeism Rates
Other Benefits

- Earlier return from maternity leave
- Higher employee productivity and morale
- Higher employer loyalty
- Recognition as a “family friendly” business
Breastfeeding Makes Good Business Sense
Easy Ways to Support Breastfeeding Employees
Basic Needs of Breastfeeding Employees are Minimal

- Time and space to express milk regularly
- Support from supervisors and colleagues
- Information on how to successfully combine breastfeeding with employment
- Access to health professionals who can assist with breastfeeding questions and concerns
Components of a Lactation Support Program
Private Room for Milk Expression

Basic Needs

- Access to nearby running water
- 4’ x 5’ space minimal
- Electrical outlet
- Lock on door
Private Room for Milk Expression

Flexible Options

- Private locked office, conference room, or other space
- Lactation room set up in small office space
- Construct walls to enclose a small space in a larger room, women’s lounge, or other area
- A restroom is **NOT** a sanitary place to breastfeed or express milk!
Room Amenity Options

- Chair and shelf or table for breast pump
- Access to nearby running water
- Breast pump equipment options
Milk Storage Options

- Employee could use her own personal cooler
- Company could provide a small college dorm room sized refrigerator located in the lactation room
- A public shared refrigerator could be used if desired by mothers and co-workers
Time to Express Milk

Basic Needs
- Two to three 15-20 minute breaks during a typical 8-hour work period (plus time to go to the site)

Flexible Options
- Use regular allotted breaks and lunch period
- Excess time that may be needed can be made up before or after work, as part of lunch period, or at other times negotiated with supervisors
Gradual Return to the Workplace

Basic Needs
- Gradual phase back to work to allow mother and baby time to adjust to the separation

Flexible Options
- Part-time for a period of time
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting
- Flexible scheduling (ex: taking off Wednesdays for a period of time)
Education

Basic Needs

- Prenatal information on breastfeeding
- Postpartum assistance in the hospital, at home, and back at work
Education

Flexible Options

- Prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding class
- Informational materials and videos
- Company contract with a lactation consultant or other lactation expert to provide prenatal education and postpartum assistance
- Individualized back-to-work consult with the contract lactation expert
- Referrals to community classes and lactation experts
Support

Basic Needs
- Support from company managers, supervisors, and co-workers
- Mother-to-mother support

Flexible Options
- Worksite lactation support policy
- Training for supervisors and co-workers
- Mother-to-mother support group
- Electronic list serves or company web-based connection network
Worksite Recognition

- Community recognition
- State recognition
- Chamber of Commerce
Monitoring progress

- Existing data
- Surveys
- Insurance claims
Breastfeeding is Good for Business!