



Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition

PRESS RELEASE

August 7, 2011

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Dana Silver, MD, FAAP 410-303-9434

Kim Knight, RN, BSN, IBCLC, RLC 410-533-5343

Coalitions to Recognize Local Businesses for Answering the Surgeon General's Call to Action

Second Annual Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards launched for the District, Maryland and Northern Virginia

In January 2011, US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin called on everyone to do their part to make it easier for mothers who choose to breastfeed. This was her first Call to Action as Surgeon General. Why breastfeeding? The preventive health benefits of breastfeeding made it a perfect choice for the Surgeon General who has a dedicated commitment to Public Health. In her Call to Action, Dr. Benjamin lists four action steps employers can take to do their part. These action steps are aligned with the Healthy People 2020 goal to increase proportion of employers that have workplace lactation support programs from 25% to 38%

Leading health organizations, including the World Health Organization and American Academy of Pediatrics, strongly recommend that infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life and that they continue to receive breastmilk for a minimum of 12 months. All too many breastfeeding mothers abandon breastfeeding when they return to work because they lack the support and facilities to breastfeed and/or pump milk at work.

Research shows that providing lactation support can help companies save money in health care expenses, reduce turnover rates, lower absenteeism and increase employee loyalty. Employers that have established workplace lactation programs have reported a \$3 for \$1 return on investment as well as make for a more productive working environment.

The DC and Maryland Breastfeeding Coalitions are eager to once again recognize local companies that offer breastfeeding support and education, and the time and space for mothers to breastfeed and/or pump breastmilk in the workplace. Businesses that accommodate nursing moms and provide a supportive work environment can be considered for a **Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Award**.

Employers and employees in all three states are invited to nominate breastfeeding-friendly workplaces through the DC Breastfeeding Coalition website at www.dcbfc.org. Nominations are being accepted between now and October 15, 2011. All nominations will be confirmed by worksite visits conducted in November. Companies will be judged in three categories by the number of employees (under 50, 51-500, over 500). Bronze, Silver, and Gold Honors will be announced in December.

“Last year, ten area businesses were awarded. This year we hope to see many more businesses recognized for doing their part to make returning to work while breastfeeding easier,” says Dr. Sahira Long, DC Breastfeeding Coalition President.

#