

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2017

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BREASTFEEDING COALITIONS & DR. RICHARD PAN HOLD CALIFORNIA MOTHER-BABY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE AWARDS

EMPLOYERS PLAY A ROLE IN SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES

SACRAMENTO, CA, May 23, 2017...Today at the State Capitol, Senator Pan hosted the Mother-Baby Friendly Workplace Awards in collaboration with the California Breastfeeding Coalition and the Sacramento Breastfeeding Coalition to recognize businesses that have successfully addressed workplace barriers for breastfeeding mothers. Over a dozen businesses across California were recognized for their exemplary efforts to adhere to California and Federal law by creating breastfeeding human resource policies, ensuring all staff are aware of their policies and talk with expectant mothers about accommodating their breastfeeding needs when they return to work.

“Breastfeeding is one of the best preventative health measures for both babies and mothers,” said Dr. Pan, a pediatrician and State Senator representing the 6th District. “It is my pleasure to honor businesses that do their part and create breastfeeding policies to ensure that mothers can breastfeed longer.”

As more and more mothers work outside the home, and evidence-based research consistently confirms that breastfeeding benefits the health of both mothers and babies, some workplaces are doing their part to encourage and support women who are breastfeeding their children.

“My manager at Anthem Blue Cross Medi-Cal ensured that I had adequate time for my scheduled breaks allowing me extra time to get settled in the nursing room. I was able to pump without feeling any pressure. Without the support of my manager and "Mother's Room" available to all Anthem Blue Cross associates pumping, I would not have been able to pump and breastfeed my baby for the full recommended 12 months,” says, mom, Katie Lazaruz

Despite state and federal protections for breastfeeding women in the workplace, not all working mothers have equal access to workplace breastfeeding support. According to the California Department of Public Health’s Maternal and Infant Health Assessment survey, only half of moms report having workplace support. Moms with lower household incomes are less likely to have workplace breastfeeding support than moms with higher household income. It also found that that moms with workplace support are two times more likely to exclusively breastfeed at three months.

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“Support is communicating with the employee before and after she takes leave, training staff on the support policy, providing a private place to pump and accommodating sufficient break time to pump,” says Robbie Gonzalez-Dow, California Breastfeeding Coalition Executive Director. “I get calls from women who struggle to access this support from their employers and they see their milk supply decrease soon after returning to work. It is very sad for them.”

The Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for about six months of the baby’s life, followed by breastfeeding in combination with the introduction of complementary food until at least 12 months of age, and continuation of breastfeeding for as long as mutually desired by mother and baby.

“We need supportive workplaces if mothers are to achieve the recommendations of their physicians and their own breastfeeding goal, especially in non-office job settings,” says Robbie Gonzalez-Dow.

All the businesses recognized demonstrate that helping breastfeeding mothers succeed can be as simple as providing break time and a private space to pump breastmilk at work, which is required by law, as well as communicating with supervisors and employees about the support. Studies show that breastfeeding mothers who are supported in the workplace take fewer sick days and have higher retention rates, which is good for employee morale and for businesses’ bottom line.

Recipients of the California Mother-Baby Friendly Workplace Award:

- Anderson Valley Health Center (Boonville/Mendocino County)
- Delta Health Care (Stockton/San Joaquin County)
- Greater El Monte Community Hospital (South El Monte/Los Angeles County)
- LA BioMed WIC Program (Inglewood/Los Angeles County)
- Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (Pasadena/Los Angeles County)
- McSwain Elementary School (Merced/Merced County)

Recipients of the Sacramento County Mother-Baby Friendly Workplace Award:

- Anthem Blue Cross Medi-Cal
- The Golden Gate Construction Group, Inc.
- California Medical Association
- Community Resources Project Inc.
- The Fringe Salon
- OmegaComp HR

For more information visit the following websites:

- California Labor Code 1030-1033
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=LAB&division=2.&title=&part=3.&chapter=3.8.&article=
- United States Department of Labor – Break Time for Nursing Mothers
<https://www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/>
- California Department of Public Health, Workplace Breastfeeding Support in California Infographic
<https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/data/surveys/MIHA/MIHAPublications/WorkplaceBreastfeedingSupportinCalifornia.pdf>
- Office Women’s Health, US Department of Health and Human Services, Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions/>
- California Breastfeeding Coalition
<http://californiabreastfeeding.org/breastfeedingrights/breastfeeding-at-work/>
- Sacramento Breastfeeding Coalition www.sacbreastfeeding.org

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