

BREASTFEEDING WELCOME HERE!

State employees make their workplace breastfeeding-friendly so mothers can continue to provide baby's best food

Public Health Problem

- South Carolina promotes breastfeeding as a strategy to prevent obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes.
- The longer the duration of breastfeeding the less likely a child will be overweight or develop diabetes. Benefits of breastfeeding for mothers include decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancer as well as diabetes.
- Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the US workforce and working mothers who want to breastfeed their child face many barriers.
- Establishing workplace policies and supportive workplace environments are recommended strategies for increasing breastfeeding. Other recommended strategies include “baby-friendly” maternity practices, educating mothers, and peer and professional support for breastfeeding.

Program

- Knowing that mothers who continue breastfeeding after returning to work need a “friendly environment”, including the support of their coworkers, supervisors, and others, the Bureau of Community Health and Chronic Disease Prevention offered space in their building to establish a lactation room.
- A storage closet was identified as the only available space and staff from the Division of Obesity Prevention and Control led renovation efforts along with other staff from the Bureau of Community Health and Chronic Disease Prevention, all working on their own time.
- These committed employees supplied furniture and other needed items, bought a refrigerator for storing breast milk, and transformed a tiny closet into a comfortable ‘Mothers Lounge.’

Impact

- At a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the new Mother’s Lounge, invited guests from the South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition, the African-American Breastfeeding Alliance, along with the deputy health commissioner, the agency personnel director, and others observed a first-hand example of reducing the barriers related to this important obesity prevention strategy - breastfeeding promotion.
- The Mothers Lounge is strongly supported by new mothers, mothers-to-be, and co-workers in the building, who carry the message about the importance of breastfeeding to others in the community.

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