



COMMUNITY HEALTH
& THE ENVIRONMENT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, (636) 949-7408

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

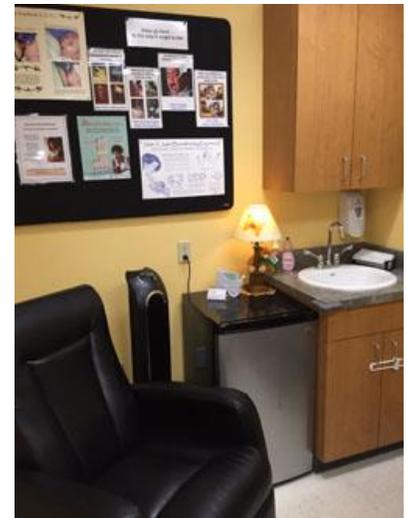
June 24, 2015

ST. CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT ENACTS BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKSITE PROGRAM

WIC-Driven Policy Cites Benefits, Creates Private Accommodations

St. Charles County, Missouri – Recognizing that breastfeeding provides numerous benefits and the many contributions made by working mothers, St. Charles County Government proudly established itself as a breastfeeding friendly workplace this spring. Introduced through the Department of Community Health and the Environment’s Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) and spread to all County buildings, this program offers specific lactation areas open to employees and guests.

Doctors consider a mother’s milk to be the ideal food for her baby since it provides all of the essential nutrients a baby needs to grow and enhance brain development. As the nutritional composition of breast milk changes in accordance to a baby’s nutritional needs while also providing necessary antibodies that protect against infection, studies show that breastfed babies have lower rates of sickness. Mothers also gain the benefits of close bonding with their child, improved bone density, and a reduced risk for breast, uterine and ovarian cancers. For more benefits of breastfeeding, please visit <http://www.sccmo.org/570/Breastfeeding-Lactation>.



With more women entering the workforce over the last several decades — and more than 61% of women with children under the age of three employed according to 2012 U.S. Department of Labor statistics — providing accommodations that assist working mothers makes sense for both families and their employers. Since breastfed babies suffer fewer illnesses, health care costs for these children are significantly lower, and their parents (both mothers and fathers) report fewer hours of lost work. In addition, studies have shown that more women return to the workplace when their companies provide breastfeeding support services, which lowers turnover and decreases training expenses.

(MORE)

(Breastfeeding Program – continued on page 2)

In addition to benefitting families and reducing costs, implementing a breastfeeding friendly workplace program is relatively easy for employers. The first step is an organizational commitment to support the program and to maximize the benefits. A second step is to dedicate a private, comfortable space that is large enough to contain at least a chair, flat surface and an electrical outlet where the mother can express milk. The final step secures management approval for women to take short breaks throughout the day to pump and store milk (a typical breaks last 15-20 minutes, two or three times each workday) or, in more advanced programs, an on-site daycare that allows direct access to children for feeding during the workday.

To provide accurate information and support to families who wish to breastfeed their children, the St. Charles County WIC program offers a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program. Trained staff and women in the community with personal breastfeeding experience lead this innovative program. Peer counselors have breastfed their own babies and have undergone essential training to help assist others. Through regular contact during the pregnancy and after the birth of the child, counselors assist families with resources, training, questions and support. The WIC program also provides families with direct referrals to other agencies that can offer additional assistance.

Funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and based at the department's Division of Public Health office (1650 Boone's Lick Road in St. Charles), the St. Charles County WIC Program presents pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five with specific supplemental foods, nutrition education and counseling, health screening, and referrals to health care for qualifying participants. Statistics show that women who participate in the WIC Program have fewer low birth weight babies, experience fewer infant deaths, and eat healthier. For information on joining WIC, please call (636) 949-7402 or visit <http://www.sccmo.org/560/Women-Infants-Children-WIC>.

###