



West Virginia **Breastfeeding Alliance**
for healthier moms & babies

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Christine Compton, WVBA (304)545-1403 ctcompton@verizon.net
or Cinny Kittle, MS (304)419-0899 ckittle@wvha.org

SUPPORTING MOMS IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance to Recognize Supportive Worksites

Governor Manchin to Announce Winners

Charleston, WV, June 1, 2009 –The West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance, (WVBA), plans to recognize worksites that are supportive of mothers in the workplace. The group will honor award recipients in August during World Breastfeeding Month, during a proclamation from Governor Joe Manchin, III. WVBA is seeking nominations of companies that encourage their employees' choice to breastfeed and that provide the means necessary to help them achieve these goals.

Many parents are aware of the importance of breastfeeding, but may be unaware that nursing is actually considered *good for business*. "Workplace support for breastfeeding women can positively impact the bottom line," stated Keri Kennedy, MPH, Director, WV Office of Healthy Lifestyles. "Among the benefits are lower healthcare costs, enhanced productivity, greater employee satisfaction, increased retention and a positive corporate image", she added.

West Virginia's current breastfeeding initiation rate is 59.3%, but drops off significantly within weeks after delivery. By the time babies reach just six-months of age, our breastfeeding rate is only about 26.8% at that stage. The national average is at about a 73.8% initiation rate and a 41.5% rate at six-months of age. The majority of moms list their need to return to work as the number one reason why breastfeeding is not even attempted, or ends up being cut short.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (HRSA), "for every dollar that is invested in support of a breastfeeding employee three dollars are saved." Also, they add that, "one-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula-fed infants."

"Breastfed babies get sick about 15 times less often than a baby fed artificial baby milk, therefore, parents miss less work to care for their sick children," said Yvonne K. Snyder, RNC, IBCLC and a Certified Family Nurse Practitioner in the Charleston,

WV area. Companies also have fewer claims made against their health insurance because breastfeeding helps to make both moms and babies healthier.

West Virginia's Breastfeeding Alliance was one of only 10 state coalitions to be awarded a HRSA grant for the Business Case for Breastfeeding, a national initiative to increase workplace support for breastfeeding families. Worksite recognition is one of many activities in this vein to be conducted during this project year, (2009-2010), by WVBA.

To nominate an exceptionally supportive workplace, nomination forms can be downloaded by visiting www.wvbfa.com. The deadline for nominations is July 6, 2009.

The West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance was formed in 2008 and welcomes new members to help further their mission. The mission of WVBA is to improve the health of West Virginians by working collaboratively to protect, promote and educate the community about breastfeeding. Additional information and membership applications can be found at www.wvbfa.com.

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