

December 21, 2011

Businesses Recognized for Breastfeeding-Friendliness

The DC and Maryland Breastfeeding Coalitions are pleased to announce the 2011 recipients of their Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards. The Workplace Awards were established in 2010 thanks to funding support from a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) called the “Business Case for Breastfeeding.” Nine area businesses will be receiving this honor on December 21, 2011 at a ceremony at Howard University Hospital. Isadora Hare, MSW, will be the keynote speaker. Ms. Hare is the Perinatal Health Specialist in the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of HRSA of the Department of Health and Human Services.

In January 2011, US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin issued her “Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding.” She urged the entire nation to remove the barriers that interfere with women reaching their breastfeeding goals. “Many mothers who choose to breastfeed quit prematurely because lactation support is unavailable in the workplace” says Dr. Sahira Long, President of the DC Breastfeeding Coalition (DCBFC).

Research confirms that providing lactation support helps companies save money in health care expenses, reduces turnover rates, lowers absenteeism and increases employee loyalty. Employers with established workplace lactation programs have reported a 3:1 return on investment, as well as a more productive working environment.

“Each of the businesses receiving the Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Award serve as role models in the area for how to successfully support mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed once they have returned to work,” says Dr. Dana Silver, Past-President of the Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition (MBC). Businesses that met the criteria for workplace lactation support as outlined in the Business Case for Breastfeeding, 2010 Affordable Health Care Act, and Healthy People 2020 goals could be nominated. Companies were judged based on their size and the accommodations they provided to breastfeeding employees—breastfeeding support and education, and the time and space for mothers to breastfeed and/or pump breastmilk in the workplace.

The recipients of this year’s Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Award are: AOL, Inc., Baltimore City Health Department, Children’s National Medical Center, Community Clinic, Inc., Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, National Institutes of Health, Northwest Hospital, and Washington Adventist Hospital. “As businesses respond to the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding and provide better workplace accommodations for breastfeeding mothers, the DCBFC and the MBC hope to see more mothers continuing to breastfeed when they return to work,” say Drs. Long and Silver.

For more information on the Regional Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards program, contact Dr. Sahira Long (202-470-2732) or Dr. Dana Silver (410-601-5324).