



San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition

CONTACTS:

Dr. Nancy Wight
858-493-0198 (pager)
wightsd@aol.com

Michele Baker
858-450-9872
Michele@mambocomm.com

Embargoed for August 24, 2005

**SAN DIEGO WORKPLACE HONORED FOR PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING
EMPLOYEES WITH FAMILIES**

Mother/Baby Friendly Workplace Awards given to Sharp Grossmont Hospital

SAN DIEGO, CA -- August 24, 2005 --- In conjunction with Breastfeeding Awareness Month, the San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition honors Sharp Grossmont Hospital with the Mother/Baby Friendly Workplace Award. The San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition recognizes exemplary efforts of companies that understand the need to provide an environment for its employees to achieve a balanced work and family life.

Faced with the changing demographics of the workplace and increasing demand for a balanced work and family life among employees, companies offer family-oriented services that support lactating mothers and their families through innovative programs that include : private rooms for expressing breast milk, free access to lactation consultants, support groups, parent resource library, parenting workshops for expectant mothers and fathers, breastfeeding equipment loan plans, and on-site childcare facilities.

With the passage of Assembly Bill 1025, the State of California is one of the first states in the country to reduce a major barrier to breastfeeding by enacting legislation requiring employers to provide unpaid break time and space to express breast milk during the workday.

In his Proclamation naming August 2005 Breastfeeding Awareness Month, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger states, "Breastfeeding forms the most basic bond between mother and baby and is a foundation for lifelong health and wellness." The Governor's proclamation goes on to state, "In addition, it is estimated that California would save \$475 million annually in health care costs and lost wages if only 50 percent of mothers breastfed exclusively for six months."

"Supporting breastfeeding employees is a win for everyone," said Dr. Audrey Naylor, chair of the United States Breastfeeding Committee, CEO of San Diego-based Wellstart International, and a former San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition board member. "Employers can experience lower health claims, absenteeism rates, and turnover rates, which can save a company thousands of dollars each year. Breastfeeding mothers are more likely to be productive and loyal to the company when they are provided onsite lactation support. And, most importantly, babies who continue breastfeeding after their moms return to work are healthier."

"Sharp HealthCare is dedicated to being the best place to receive care, the best place to practice medicine and the best place to work. Breastfeeding support in the workplace can offer a considerable return on investment by lowering healthcare costs, enhancing productivity, improving employee satisfaction, increasing retention, and improving public image. At Grossmont Hospital we support all our mothers, infants and families, whether they be patients or employees," said Jeanine Pyka, manager of OB/GYN, Lactation and Parent Support at the Women's Health Center of Sharp Grossmont Hospital and workplace recipient of the 2005 Mother/Baby Friendly Workplace Award. "We wholeheartedly support the important work of the San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition and are honored to be recognized."

"In recent years more companies have initiated corporate lactation and family care programs in recognition of the fact that employees have an increasing demand to balance their work and family lives. We commend San Diego companies such as Sharp Grossmont Hospital, Sea World, Qualcomm, Hewlett-Packard, Solar Turbines, UCSD Healthcare and many others for

their leadership in supporting their employees' choice to continue to breastfeed when they return to work," said Eve Moeran, RN, IBCLC, and president of the San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition. "Programs such as those offered by these companies provide health benefits to women and infants, while providing employers' real business benefits such as increased employee retention and lower health costs."

Throughout California, more than 120 Mother/Baby Friendly workplaces are being honored today with awards from local breastfeeding coalitions like San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition. Today's awards are being coordinated by the California Breastfeeding Coalition, which serves as an umbrella organization, bringing together local breastfeeding coalitions and individuals to work on making California a breastfeeding-friendly state.

About the San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition

San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 that is dedicated to educating health professionals and the public about breastfeeding support and decreasing the societal barriers to breastfeeding. Many mothers fail to breastfeed or prematurely wean because of a perceived or actual lack of support from their employers. The Mother/Baby Friendly Workplace Award project will decrease those barriers by helping employers to realize the value of supporting breastfeeding working mothers. For more information, please visit its website at www.breastfeeding.org.

###