



Letter to Vermont Employers

To all Vermonters,

Breastfeeding is good business for Vermont. When businesses support their employees in continuing to breastfeed, everyone wins. Businesses are rewarded with reduced absenteeism, lower health care costs, and increased employee loyalty. Mothers and babies are rewarded with health benefits, cost savings, and the opportunity to enjoy the special bond of breastfeeding even when separations are necessary. Offering a breastfeeding-friendly workplace also helps businesses recruit and retain employees and gives the business a positive image in the community.

Encouraging mothers to breastfeed is a key strategy of the Fit & Healthy Vermonters state plan for the prevention of obesity. Breastfeeding is a powerful ally in the State of Vermont's drive to reduce chronic care issues associated with overweight and obesity, diabetes asthma, and many other diseases. The health benefits of breastfeeding are so well documented that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that ALL babies be breastfed for at least one year and longer if mother and baby desire.

To help new mothers succeed in giving their babies the healthiest start in life, we invite you to join the Vermont Breastfeeding Employer Project. The purpose of this project is to help employers provide supportive workplace policies, to comply with Vermont's labor law supporting nursing mothers in the workplace, and to formally recognize employers who do. Most mothers in Vermont initiate breastfeeding but there is a quick decline in the rates of exclusive breastfeeding and many mother stop before they are ready. This project is also dedicated to providing information and support to new mothers, and to recognizing and assisting child care providers as an essential link in supporting the breastfeeding relationship.

Making your workplace breastfeeding friendly is easy. The information found at this website can help you comply with the state and federal laws and achieve the Breastfeeding Friendly Employer designation. If you already have breastfeeding friendly policies in place, congratulations!

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Vermont families.

Sincerely,

Harry Chen, MD
Commissioner of Health