

**Arizona Public Health Association (AzPHA)
Resolution Form**

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1. a. Summary and Statement of the Problem

Breastfeeding Support at Worksites

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently identified 24 recommended community strategies to use in reversing the obesity epidemic in the United States. Strategy #11 is “*Communities should increase support for breastfeeding*”.¹

b. Background of the Issue

Approximately two thirds of U.S. Adults and one fifth of U.S. children are obese or overweight. In Arizona, 35.6% of adults are overweight and 25.5% are obese. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance (PedNSS) 2006 report indicates that in the Arizona WIC program, 13.5% of enrolled children age two to five are overweight (BMI-for-age \geq 95th percentile). In comparison, 10.1% of children in the Arizona WIC program were overweight in 1998.

Systematic reviews of epidemiologic studies indicate that breastfeeding helps prevent pediatric obesity and that each additional month of breastfeeding was associated with a 4% decrease in the risk of obesity.¹

Breastfeeding mothers have a decreased risk for breast and ovarian cancers as lower risk for developing type 2 diabetes.² Breastfeeding also is associated with greater postpartum weight loss for women. Failure to lose the weight gained during pregnancy contributes to obesity in women of childbearing age.^{3,4}

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), indicates that a “State of the Art” option to support breastfeeding is that the company allows the mother to bring the baby to work during the first few months.⁵

Mothers and babies are not the only ones who benefit from breastfeeding. Companies that provide breastfeeding-friendly policies find significant cost savings including lower rates of absenteeism, lower health care costs, better retention of employees, and higher productivity along with increased company loyalty.⁵

2. Statement of the Desired Action

Encourage all state and local governments to implement policies to support the initiation and duration of breastfeeding.

3. Which other groups, organizations support or oppose your position?

Oppose:

Local Governments

Support:

Arizona Department of Education
American Academy of Pediatrics – Arizona Chapter
Arizona Breastfeeding Coalition
Arizona Department of Health Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
International Board Certified Lactation Consultants
La Leche League
US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration

4. Describe the relationship of this issue to current AzPHA Legislative Priorities.

Support for is consistent with the AzPHA legislative priority of:

Supporting and protecting healthy environments, including safe water, clean air, urban planning and tobacco-free lifestyles.

5. Do you see this as an issue for legislation? No

If so, has legislation already been initiated? No

By Whom?

If not an issue for legislation, have other groups initiated action on this subject? No

6. Financial and Public Health Analysis

Women with children are the fastest growing segment of the workforce. In Arizona, 76.5% of all new mothers choose to breastfeed and give their babies important nutrition and health benefits. As many of these new mothers return to work, only 11.9% of mothers in Arizona are able to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months.⁶

Breastfeeding support programs result in more satisfied, loyal employees and provide cost savings to business. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) includes these examples of cost savings in *The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*:

One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants.

The insurance company CIGNA conducted a 2-year study of 343 employees who participated in their lactation support program, and found that the program resulted in an annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses, 62 percent fewer prescriptions, and \$60,000 in reduced absenteeism rates.

Mutual of Omaha's lactation support program led to a retention rate of 83 percent of their maternity workforce compared to the national average of only 59 percent.

Although 80 percent of its employees are male, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power found that a lactation support program for mothers, fathers, and partners of male employees made a dramatic difference in reducing turnover and absenteeism rates for both male and female workers.”⁵ (For Business Managers)

Breastfeeding support requires few resources. Cost effective components include privacy to express milk, flexible breaks, education, and support.

7. Would you and your group be willing to:

Write letters? Yes

Prepare testimony? Yes

Present testimony? Yes

Speak to other groups about this? Yes

Prepare a Position Paper for the Arizona Public Health Association for review and approval? Yes

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States. *MMWR* 58(RR07); 1-26, 2009
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research to Practice Series, No. 4, Does Breastfeeding Reduce the Risk of Pediatric Overweight. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/breastfeeding_r2p.pdf. Accessed August 13, 2009.
3. Baker, JL, Gamborg, M, Heitmann, BL, Lissner, L., Sorensen, TIA, Rasmussen, KM. Breastfeeding Reduces Postpartum Weight Retention. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2008;88:1543-51.
4. Kac, G, Benicio, M, Velásquez-Meléndez, G, Valente, JG, Struchiner, C. Breastfeeding and Postpartum Weight Retention in a Cohort of Brazilian Women. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2004;79:587-93.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources Services and Administration. The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite. 2008.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Breastfeeding Report Card, United States: Outcome Indicators. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/BREASTFEEDING/DATA/report_card2.htm. Accessed August 13, 2009.