

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Evaluation of workplace lactation support Among Pennsylvania

Colleen Payton MPH,CHES

Thomas Jefferson University, Colleen.Payton@jefferson.edu

Martha Romney RN,MS,JD,MPH

JSPH, Martha.Romney@jefferson.edu

Beth Olson

bholson@wisc.edu

Dian J. Abatemarco

Marianna LaNoue

Thomas Jefferson University, marianna.lanoue@jefferson.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Evaluation of workplace lactation support Among Pennsylvania

Authors

Colleen Payton MPH,CHES; Martha Romney RN,MS,JD,MPH; Beth Olson; Dian J. Abatemarco; Marianna LaNoue; and Amy Leader

With more women working and mothers becoming one of the growing sectors of the labor force, it is important to understand how mothers can continue to breastfeed while working. Employers can modify the built and social environment at work to accommodate breastfeeding employees and allow for continued participation in the labor force. This study's purpose was to 1) characterize breastfeeding policies and programs currently offered at Pennsylvania workplaces and 2) identify opportunities for employers to improve support for breastfeeding employees. The Breastfeeding and Employment Study (BEST) organization survey was electronically administered to business coalition on health employer members in Pennsylvania. A workplace lactation support score was computed ranging from 0-22 points, including physical space (0-7 points), policy (0-3 points), resources (0-6 points), and time (0-6 points). Higher scores indicate more breastfeeding support. Of the 23 employers, 87% represented a non-healthcare industry. The mean total workplace lactation support score was 15.26 (SD 2.09), including physical space 5.52 (SD 1.08), policy 1.17 (SD 0.94), resources 3.83 (SD 1.53), and time 4.74 (SD 0.81). Workplace lactation support was high among business coalition on health employers. Specific recommendations include opportunities for increased structural support (physical space and policy) and employee support (resources and time). Employers can utilize workplace lactation support scores to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement and to strategize which interventions are feasible for implementation and evaluation.