



PRESS RELEASE

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In Support of the Surgeon General's *Call to Action*, Ten Maryland/D.C. Businesses Win Region's First Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards

[Baltimore, MD] January 20 2011 – Three out of four women in the United States provide their infants with the healthiest start in life by breastfeeding, and today Surgeon General Regina Benjamin called on the entire nation to support the removal of barriers to this important public health behavior. The Surgeon General's *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* is an unprecedented document from the nation's highest medical source, calling on health care providers, employers, insurers, policymakers, researchers, and the community at large to take 20 concrete action steps to support mothers in reaching their personal breastfeeding goals.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/breastfeeding/index.html>

The Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition (MBC) is proud to announce their participation in the Surgeon General's *Call to Action*. Along with the DC Breastfeeding Coalition, MBC recently co-sponsored the *DC/MD Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards*. This program awards employers who recognize the importance of human milk for the health of the region's babies and their families. Businesses must meet criteria for workplace breastfeeding support established in the Affordable Care Act and by Healthy People 2020, a program from the Department of Health and Human Services that sets long-term health objectives and strategies for the nation. The award is given at the bronze, silver, or gold levels, depending on the number of supports and amenities offered and the processes put in place, such as providing a private, clean room for nursing employees to pump breast milk and time in which to do it.

The 2011 recipients of the *DC/Maryland Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Awards* are: **Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Anne Arundel Medical Center, Children's National Medical Center, Fairfax County Government, Georgetown Hospital, Howard County Health Department, Johns Hopkins East Baltimore Medical Campus, Kaiser Permanente, Office of Personnel Management, and the University of Maryland Baltimore.** Awards will be

presented over the next few weeks and additional recognition of the achievements will be made at MBC's next meeting on February 3rd in Laurel, MD.

The Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)3 whose goal is to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding in the State of Maryland. It is a member coalition of the United States Breastfeeding Committee. MBC emphasizes to public and professionals alike the importance of human milk to the overall health of our population. *The health benefits of human milk are indisputable and abundant.*

According to Maryland's Business Case for Breastfeeding chair, Dr. Dana Silver, "Maryland has a 73.4% breastfeeding initiation rate (slightly below the nation average of 75%). These numbers drop markedly at 6 weeks and 3 months, coinciding with return to work milestones. Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition is working to help remove barriers for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. We hope that by acknowledging these exceptional businesses that support mothers in the workplace, we can encourage others to do the same. We will continue to work with businesses and citizens alike to move the Surgeon General's *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* forward."

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