

Workplace Breastfeeding Programs: Employer Case Studies



National Business Group on Health

More than 70% of new mothers now follow their doctor’s advice to breastfeed immediately after birth. However, women employed full-time are less likely to initiate breastfeeding and to continue breastfeeding once they return to work.

Breastfeeding is important because it may help to mitigate health care costs, lost productivity and absenteeism by:

- Reducing the risk of some short- and long-term health issues for women and children;
- Decreasing employee absences associated with caring for a sick child;
- Promoting an earlier return from maternity leave; and
- Increasing retention of female employees.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Association of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommend:

- Babies receive nothing but breast milk during the first 6 months of life.
- Mothers continue breastfeeding for at least the first year and beyond.

Employers can create tailored workplace breastfeeding programs and policies. This issue brief presents exemplary case studies to provide guidance to employers regarding the development, implementation and evaluation of workplace breastfeeding programs.

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CIGNA Corporation

Philadelphia, Pa.

CIGNA, a global health service company, is dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and security. CIGNA operating subsidiaries provide an integrated suite of medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and vision care benefits, as well as group life, accident and disability insurance, to more than 46 million people throughout the United States and around the world.

In 1995, CIGNA implemented a comprehensive program to eliminate worksite barriers that keep women from choosing to breastfeed and continuing to breastfeed after returning to work. Today, for those mothers who breastfeed their babies and wish to continue to breastfeed after returning to work, CIGNA's program helps make the transition easier and healthier for mother and child. The program, **CIGNA Moms**, is designed to help a mother provide the best nutrition for her baby by making it easy to breastfeed before and after her return to work. Mothers receive ongoing support from a network of breastfeeding experts before and after the birth of the baby.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: On-site Nursing Mothers' Rooms are included in floor plans for CIGNA workplaces or if no room is available, an alternate space is provided. All locations have at least one room that either contains a sink or has one nearby. Depending on the number of employees, some locations have Nursing Mothers' Rooms on every floor or in the on-site health center (large spaces with curtains and sinks).

Breastfeeding Equipment: All women enrolled in the program are given a portable breast pump, a carrying case and all needed supplies. The portable pumps are necessary as some women travel frequently for work.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Flexible scheduling for milk expression needs are offered during regular break times.

Education: Prenatal education kit, classes and consultation with a lactation consultant before and after giving birth are offered. Literature on breast engorgement, breastfeeding and working, milk storage and collection, and managing nipple soreness are provided.

Support: Telephone support for breastfeeding women during maternity leave, a return-to-work consultation and ongoing support from a lactation consultant. Mothers also support one another, sharing stories and pictures in the Nursing Mothers' Rooms.

Before delivery, a lactation consultant talks with expectant mothers about what they can do to prepare for breastfeeding and what to expect when the baby arrives. After the baby arrives, during a mother's short-term disability or family medical leave, the lactation consultant continues to communicate with the mom by answering her questions, teaching her a healthy breastfeeding diet, discussing proper breast care and helping the mother prepare to return to work while continuing to breastfeed. Further, the lactation consultant teaches her how to properly store milk, gives tips on maintaining milk supply and explains how to use a breast pump. For six months following a mother's return to work, a lactation consultant will contact her every few weeks to answer questions and confirm that both mother and baby are doing well.

Program Impact*:

- Annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses for breastfeeding mothers and children;
- 77% reduction in lost work time due to infant illness, with annual savings of \$60,000;
- Lower pharmacy costs due to 62% fewer prescriptions;
- Increased breastfeeding rates — 72.5% at 6 months compared to the national average of 21.1% for employed mothers; and
- Recognition as a Workplace Model of Excellence by the National Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition.

** A formal study published in 2000 and conducted by the UCLA Centers for Healthy Children found that the program enabled mothers to efficiently express breast milk without impacting workplace productivity and did indeed result in substantial cost savings to the company. The program also accomplished its goal of improving breastfeeding rates among its employees, which are now significantly higher than the national average.*

With an employee pool of approximately 26,000, 75% of whom are women, company officials believe that the potential cost reductions in health care expenses and employee turnover more than offset the nominal expenses of implementing and maintaining a program that supports an employee's decision to breastfeed. The **CIGNA Moms** program is available at all CIGNA offices nationwide, with approximately 300 to 400 employees participating annually.

With so many employees participating, word of mouth seems to be the best advertising for the **CIGNA Moms** program. CIGNA integrates information about its breastfeeding program in its maternity program and wellness programs.

Employees with CIGNA Medical coverage can also enroll in the **CIGNA Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies** program, a telephonically-based coaching program, or use the March of Dimes "Healthy Babies, Healthy Business" (HBHB) program which is a multi-dimensional, Internet-based health education program available on the mycigna.com member website.

Corning, Incorporated

Corning, N.Y.

Corning Incorporated, is a world leader in specialty glass and ceramics. The company creates and makes keystone components that enable high-technology systems for consumer electronics, mobile emissions control, telecommunications and life sciences. Corning succeeds through sustained investment in R&D, over 150 years of materials science and process engineering knowledge, and a distinctive, collaborative culture.

Corning began its breastfeeding program in March 1997. Program implementation took about six months of planning, meetings and gaining buy-in from facility management. Corning faced some challenges when setting up its program, including locating space to provide adequately furnished rooms that are both private and secure, obtaining lactation consultants in rural areas and scheduling breaks for factory workers. The initial costs were minimal and related to setting up or constructing the rooms and providing room amenities. Lactation rooms for nursing mothers are made available in all buildings nationwide, including manufacturing plants. As of February 2009, Corning had 19 U.S. locations with lactation rooms.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: Lactation rooms are made available in all buildings nationwide, including the manufacturing plants. Some rooms are large enough for multiple users but are often used by one person at a time. When needed, a privacy screen can divide the room into separate areas to enable several women to use the room at the same time. Amenities include a table, a chair, a breast pump, a telephone (for emergencies or voicemail), germicidal cleaner and a sign-in sheet. Optional items may include a sink, lockers and a refrigerator for storing milk.

Breastfeeding Equipment: Corning provides a hospital-grade pump; employees buy the attachment kit. The same brand and model of pump is provided in all lactation rooms so that employees working in multiple locations have compatible pumps. Employees can also borrow a personal pump for up to two weeks when traveling for business or vacation.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Employees express milk during designated breaks as worked out with their supervisor. Scheduling can be a bit more difficult for hourly employees working on production lines. Phasing back in to work is encouraged by the employer and negotiated between employees and supervisors.

Education: Prenatal classes are available on-site. The health benefits of breastfeeding are incorporated into the class curriculum. Prenatal vitamins are provided at no cost for employees through the medical plan pharmacy benefit.

Support: A lactation consultant service is provided for lactation support. In addition, referrals to public/private community resources are offered for situations beyond the scope of the program.

A corporate lactation consultant is available for phone consultations. Some locations also provide on-site consultants. The lactation consultant is responsible for scheduling room usage. A sign-in sheet is used to track participation. There is no limit on the number of times an employee can contact the lactation consultant.

Corning provides an internal employee website to promote the breastfeeding support program. Through this website, employees can learn about the program, find lactation room locations and obtain contact information for lactation consultants. Further, newsletters, brochures, on-site prenatal classes, free prenatal vitamins, and a 24-hour nurseline are offered to promote the program and the importance of maternal and child health. A brochure is also available to inform employees about the program.

Phasing back into work after maternity leave is encouraged by Corning. Employees discuss the details of their return to work with their supervisors. Two weeks before returning to work, Corning also offers a worksite meeting between the participant and the lactation consultant to review the transition to work and pumping procedures.

CVS Caremark

Woonsocket, R.I.

CVS Caremark, In 2007, CVS Corporation and Caremark Rx, Inc. merged to become CVS Caremark. The company fills and manages more than 1 billion prescriptions annually. In 2009, CVS Caremark was ranked #19 on the Fortune 500. The company has 215,000 employees across the U.S. There are 65 CVS Caremark sites that have 100 or more employees and 7,000 retail stores with 25 or more employees. The CVS Caremark workforce is predominately female (69%) and 81% of female employees are younger than 50.

Noticeable strides have been made in the field of workplace breastfeeding at the company's Rhode Island campus, where 60% of the workforce is female. Approximately 25-50 births occur per year. Furthermore, since slightly less than half of female employees at this location are under 50, many more women could potentially give birth within the next year. Eight Mothers' Rooms, one per building, are available at the Rhode Island campus.

The Rhode Island campus began its worksite breastfeeding program in 2005. Initially, a recliner was provided in the ladies' restroom lounge for nursing mothers. However, the campus transitioned to a more private environment, designating a small exam room as a Mothers' Room exclusively for lactating mothers. This new Mothers' Room included space for one breastfeeding mother, a refrigerator, art work, a bulletin board for baby photos and health education pamphlets. In 2006, increased demand necessitated moving to a larger room where three stations were available and enclosed by curtains for privacy. Access to the room requires a security card. The company also decided to grant access to visiting employees and consultants upon request. Since the program's inception, the Mothers' Rooms have been created and maintained jointly by the Employee Relations office and the **Your Health Matters** wellness program.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: All rooms are for lactation only and entry is granted via security pass. Amenities include: private room with security card access, curtains for privacy in rooms with multiple stations, storage for breast pumps, refrigerator for milk storage, nursing pads, moisturizing cream and health education pamphlets.

Breastfeeding Equipment: CVS Caremark does not provide breast pumps to its employees and requires each employee to supply her own equipment. Women may store their pumps in the room.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Mothers are responsible for maintaining the room's schedule, which is designated on a clipboard in each room.

Education & Support: Aside from health education pamphlets, the employee wellness department refers mothers returning to work to other available education resources. In addition, the maternity management program and the disability manager, Unum, refer mothers returning from maternity leave to available resources.

Fortunately, CVS Caremark encountered few barriers in designing their Mothers' Rooms. By using existing exam rooms that were previously unoccupied, CVS Caremark incurred minimal costs. Room maintenance was reimbursed by the human resources department. Currently, scheduling for the Mothers' Rooms is organized by a clipboard in each room.

Word of mouth has been the most successful means of advertising the program. In addition, the employee wellness department refers new mothers to the available resources. The human resources office is another method of referral. Mothers returning from maternity leave must file disability claim paperwork, at which time they are given information on the Mothers' Rooms.

CVS Caremark recently contracted with OptumHealth as its new maternity management vendor. OptumHealth provides access to a variety of maternal and child health resources for all employees, regardless of health plan. Services currently included in the customized OptumHealth program include:

- Maternal support and counseling
- On-site NICU management
- NICU bill audit with all major medical carriers
- Virtual parenting classes
- Community Oriented Pediatric Education (COPE) program (NICU program)
- Program incentives: \$100 per person; \$50 savings bond for child

CVS Caremark states that this program fits well into its overarching comprehensive wellness program, especially given the large percentage of female employees of child-bearing age.

Program outcomes have not been systematically tracked as of yet. However, CVS Caremark recently initiated data tracking with Thomson Reuters in order to gauge wellness outcomes and return-on-investment (ROI). The company also began a users' satisfaction survey. Currently, the company does not have a formal, written lactation policy.

Occidental Oil and Gas Corporation

A subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum Corporation

Houston, Texas

Occidental Petroleum Corporation, is an international oil and gas exploration and production company. In 2008, based on market capitalization, Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy) was the fourth largest U.S. oil and gas company. Oxy employs 10,000 employees worldwide with 7,000 employees based in the United States. The company workforce is predominantly male.

About 10 years ago, mothers in the Oil and Gas Division who were returning to work after pregnancy requested a lactation support program. This division is approximately 16% women and 7% are of childbearing age, defined as women born between 1964 and 1990. At the program's inception, Oxy created a written lactation policy and conducted a needs assessment of breastfeeding employees. One of the early program challenges was finding a room that had a lock, electricity, AC/heat, a computer connection and a nearby water source. The costs to begin and maintain the lactation program were minimal and were absorbed in the occupational health budget.

Oxy's lactation spaces and amenities developed over time. The first space available for breastfeeding mothers was actually a file room. Privacy screens, chairs, a refrigerator and blankets were provided. Next, the company decided to create a room designated for lactation only. The room is located near the kitchen, the restroom and the occupational health manager's office (in case assistance was needed).

Since some of the company's field sites are too small to have a designated lactation room, they created site-specific lactation areas. Oxy's Occupational Health Department is available to assist with suggestions and resources.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: Lactation areas can be made available in any company location nationwide. The larger sites have Mothers' Rooms with key access for nursing mothers. Amenities include a table, a comfortable chair or recliner, a telephone, laptop connections, a radio/CD player, relaxation CDs, germicidal cleaner, a nearby water source, bottled water, a small refrigerator for storing milk, a back-up cooler, a clock, a calendar, reading materials, hand sanitizer lotion and paper towels. In each Mothers' Room, there is an "etiquette" poster with information on emergency phone numbers, room scheduling rules, milk storage safety guidelines and hygiene/sanitation requirements.

Breastfeeding Equipment: Oxy does not provide breastfeeding equipment. Each employee brings her own pump. Women can store breastfeeding pumps inside the lactation rooms to avoid transporting them to and from work each day.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Employees express milk during designated breaks as agreed with their supervisor. Work schedules and lunch breaks can be adjusted to accommodate pumping. Currently, lactation areas can be available nationwide. At the largest sites, there are designated Mother's Rooms and mothers complete scheduling requests online using an Outlook calendar.

Education & Support: A journal is kept in each lactation room for mothers to share stories and ask questions, providing informal mother-to-mother support. Lactation support, such as access to a lactation consultant, may be available through the company's health insurance providers. In addition, the company offers referrals to public/private community resources. Additionally, pre-pregnancy educational programs are available through health benefits providers for those employees who are enrolled.

Oxy does not use a formal program communications strategy to publicize its lactation program, however, the program has increased in popularity, mostly by word of mouth. The lactation room is available for any Oxy nursing mother including employees' family members and visiting clients. The short-term disability manager informs mothers returning to work of the lactation program. In addition, supervisors contact the occupational health manager to notify the manager of employees who may want to use the room upon returning to work. Mothers who are ill may not use the Mothers' Rooms.

Program participants are e-mailed biannually to evaluate their satisfaction with the program. In addition, Oxy's worksite breastfeeding support policy is reviewed periodically for effectiveness and necessary changes. Since Oxy's health promotion strategy is based on individualized health and wellness, the lactation support program is constantly evolving to fit the needs of breastfeeding employees.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) recognizes companies as "Mother-Friendly Worksites" if they provide accommodations for new mothers returning to work who desire to continue breastfeeding. When Oxy's headquarters in Houston was recognized as a "Mother-Friendly Worksite" in July 2003, the company became one of the first oil companies to win this honor.

Texas Instruments Incorporated

Dallas, Texas

Texas Instruments, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, provides innovative semiconductor technologies to help customers create the world's most advanced electronics. Texas Instruments (TI) employs 26,000 employees worldwide with 11,600 employees in the United States. Female employees represent only 23% of its U.S. workforce.

The fact that the TI workforce is predominantly male did not deter breastfeeding mothers from requesting an on-site lactation support program. A grassroots campaign by breastfeeding mothers in the early 1990s captured the attention of managers at TI. Early program challenges included securing adequate funding and space. TI worked with its facilities management to identify space for lactation rooms — existing rooms that already had plumbing or were located near a restroom. Additionally, TI decided to include at least one lactation room in each new building it designed.

Nursing Mothers' Rooms are found in all TI buildings nationwide, including the manufacturing plants. Breastfeeding mothers can complete scheduling requests for lactation rooms online. Each room locks from the inside and a code is needed for entrance.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: Typical room size is 10 feet by 10 feet. Amenities include a comfortable chair, a breast pump, a flat surface area for the pump, a telephone, a wireless Internet connection and a refrigerator for storing milk.

Breastfeeding Equipment: TI provides a hospital-grade pump; employee buys the attachment kit.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Employees express milk during designated breaks as worked out with their supervisor. Phasing back in to work is encouraged by the employer and negotiated between employees and supervisors.

Education: Employees can access the pregnancy center on the LiveHealthyAtTI.com website which offers a wealth of information ranging from prenatal care and healthy pregnancy to baby's first weeks.

Support: Access to 24-hour lactation support is available through a lactation consultant service contracted by the company.

On-site occupational nurses are available to help breastfeeding mothers. Furthermore, breastfeeding mothers are encouraged to work with lactation consultants contracted by the company. Lactation consultants provide 24-hour phone support.

The Work-Life department is responsible for promoting, implementing and maintaining the breastfeeding support program. TI also offers several other family-friendly benefits, including on-site school break and summer programs for children of employees. Word of mouth and an internal employee website are used to promote the breastfeeding support program.

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About the Center for Prevention and Health Services

Mission: Educate large employers about diseases and health issues in order to protect and promote health and well-being among their employees and beneficiaries as well as control costs.

The Center:

- Identifies strategies and develops tools to address health and benefits issues.
- Translates health research into practical solutions for large employers.
- Provides the national voice for large employers and links them with national expertise and resources.

For more information, e-mail healthservices@businessgrouphealth.org.

Issue Brief

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About the National Business Group on Health

The Business Group is the only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to representing large employers' perspectives on national health issues and providing solutions to its members' most important health care and health benefits challenges. The Business Group fosters the development of a safe health care delivery system and treatments based on scientific evidence. Members share strategies for controlling costs, improving patient safety and quality of care, increasing productivity and supporting healthy lifestyles.

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