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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: August 1, 2010

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**AUGUST IS BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH  
Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition Honors Supportive Workplaces and  
Offers Assistance Complying with New Legislation**

YPSILANTI, Mich., August 1, 2010 — A recent study published in *Pediatrics* concluded that if most new mothers in the U.S. breastfed their babies for the first six months, 1,000 lives and 13 billion dollars would be saved annually (April 5, 2010). One of the top causes for women to quit breastfeeding early is working outside the home. The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition recognizes local employers and business for supporting their breastfeeding employees. Nominations for this year's Workplace Lactation Support Awards are being accepted until August 10<sup>th</sup> at the Coalition's website <http://www.motherfriendlyworkplace.org>. An awards ceremony and Breastfeeding Awareness Month Celebration is scheduled for August 20<sup>th</sup> at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department.

“The needs of women who wish to continue breastfeeding after returning to work are relatively few and fairly simple to address,” says Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coordinator Gayathri Akella. “We’re hopeful the new legislation will help employers make positive changes.” Generally, the availability of an efficient breast pump; a private and comfortable worksite location; and the opportunity to pump up to three times during the day is all that is needed, she continued. Over 70% of employed mothers with children under three work full time, and if these same women were offered support from their employers, they would likely continue to breastfeed at least six months.

The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition (WCBC) pays special attention to the needs and challenges of these women. As part of the global campaign to generate public awareness and support for breastfeeding, the Coalition recognizes local employers and businesses for supporting their breastfeeding employees. The Coalition presents an annual award to honor Washtenaw County employers and businesses with breastfeeding friendly policies and worksite lactation support.

Supportive businesses or employers are encouraged to apply for recognition by August 10<sup>th</sup>. Visit the Coalition's website for details: <http://www.motherfriendlyworkplace.org>.

The Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coalition can assist employers and businesses that must adhere to new laws supportive of nursing mothers working in hourly wage jobs. The health care bill passed by the U.S. Congress last month guarantees "reasonable" break times as well as a suitable space for expressing breast milk while at work. Although some of the details are not well-defined and businesses with fewer than 50 employees may be exempt, the law will likely provide support to many women returning to work and who wish to continue breastfeeding.

Awards will be presented on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Events will take place at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, located at 555 Towner Street in Ypsilanti, and they will include an employer information session as well as education event for expectant parents, grandparents and support persons.



### **Awards Ceremony and Celebration**

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| 9:00 am  | 2010 Workplace Lactation Support Awards Ceremony  |
| 12:00 pm | "Why Breastfeed?" Information Open House for Washtenaw County Employees   |
| 1:30 pm  | "Care for Moms" Ice-cream Social and Educational Event for Expectant Moms, Dads, Grandparents and Support Persons |

Anyone seeking information on breastfeeding or seeking help with workplace lactation support is encouraged to contact Gayathri Akella or Keleigh Lee, Coalition Co-Chairs.

Gayathri Akella, MS, RD, IBCLC, Washtenaw County Breastfeeding Coordinator and Coalition Co-Chair, 734-544-6794 or [akellag@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:akellag@ewashtenaw.org)

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For more information on the Washtenaw Breastfeeding Coalition and 2010 Workplace Lactation Support Awards, visit <http://www.motherfriendlyworkplace.org>.

For details on the new legislation, please see

<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/Workplace/WorkplaceSupport/WorkplaceSupportinHealthCareReform/tabid/175/Default.aspx>, or this article from the *New York Times* parenting blog: <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/09/new-rules-about-breast-pumps-at-work/>

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