



Michigan Breastfeeding Network

MIBFN POSITION PAPER: IN SUPPORT OF THE BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS OF MOTHER-EMPLOYEES

Overview

Breastfeeding is universally recognized as the optimal feeding method for both women and children, but success is dependent on expansive support systems. Mothers who continue breastfeeding after returning to work need a supportive environment. Within the workforce, women are vital contributors to a company's success, providing keen perspective and driving economic vitality. When companies support breastfeeding, businesses gain a three-to-one return on investment in addition to greater employee retention, lower absenteeism, and a more creative and productive work environment.

Policy Recommendations

The federal Break Time For Nursing Mothers legislation, enacted in 2010 under the Affordable Care Act, requires that employers provide reasonable break time and a private, secure space for employees to express their milk during the work period. This is a good start to nationwide lactation accommodation but it does not do enough. Comprehensive workplace breastfeeding policies are needed to bridge the gap that currently exists between legal protection and the reality of workplace accommodations.

In support of the breastfeeding success of working mothers, the Michigan Breastfeeding Network (MIBFN) advocates for the following:

- **Employers should provide comprehensive workplace breastfeeding protection for all employees regardless of legal status and employment classification.**
- **Employers should provide flexible, comprehensive time solutions for all employees regardless of legal status and employment classification.**
- **Regardless of work environment, space solutions should be provided for all employees.**
- **Whenever feasible, access to baby for direct breastfeeding in the workplace should be the standard for employees.**
- **Comprehensive paid family leave legislation should be adopted at the national level.**

Vision for the Future

MIBFN envisions a Michigan where all working families are supported in reaching their breastfeeding goals, all employers recognize the value of implementing breastfeeding-friendly workplace policies, and all employees work to create a supportive breastfeeding environment.