

## North Dakota Businesses Designated as “Infant Friendly”

Nine North Dakota businesses are the first in North Dakota to be recognized as "Infant Friendly," according to Deanna Askew, Healthy Communities coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health.

The North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, announces the new "infant friendly" designation, which recognizes worksites that adopt a workplace breastfeeding policy that includes:

- Flexible work scheduling, including scheduling breaks and permitting work patterns that provide time for expression of breast milk.
- A convenient, sanitary, safe and private location (other than a restroom), allowing privacy for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk.
- A convenient, clean and safe water source with facilities for washing hands and rinsing breast-pumping equipment located near the private location.
- A convenient place for temporarily storing breast milk, such as a refrigerator or cooler.

The following North Dakota businesses have been designated as infant-friendly:

- Barnes County, Valley City
- Bismarck State College, Bismarck
- Central Avenue Health Mart Pharmacy, Valley City
- Custer Health, Mandan
- Foster County Public Health Department, Carrington
- North Dakota State University
- St. Catherine Elementary School, Valley City
- Valley Health and WIC, Grand Forks
- North Dakota Department of Health, Bismarck

The designation of these businesses coincided with Governor Jack Dalrymple’s proclamation of Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7, 2011. This coincided with the global celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual event that draws attention to the health impacts of breastfeeding for both babies and mothers.

“We understand that if a woman has support in her place of employment that she will breastfeed her infant for a longer duration,” said Askew. “This will give the baby an edge in overall health, including less infections, disease, obesity and diabetes.”

According to research, breastfeeding also benefits the employer. Such benefits include lower health-care costs because breastfed babies are healthier, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover rates since women are more likely to return to their previous jobs if the company provides support for breastfeeding mothers. These benefits can provide considerable cost savings to employers.

"We found that providing lactation support is a win-win for both the new mom and us, the employer," said Doreen Saylor, R.Ph., pharmacist and owner of Central Avenue Health Mart Pharmacy in Valley City. "Now the new mom doesn't have to choose between breastfeeding and

working. She can reach her personal breastfeeding goals and we get to keep a valuable employee."

The infant-friendly designations and World Breastfeeding Week are perfect complements to the 2011 Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding. In January, Surgeon General Dr. Regina M. Benjamin called on all sectors of society to help remove the obstacles faced by women who want to breastfeed.

Businesses interested in joining the list of recognized organizations can find resources for supporting their employees and the simple application at [www.ndhealth.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.ndhealth.gov/breastfeeding).

For more information about the infant friendly designation, contact Deanna Askew, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4568.