



# Northwest Medical Center

A Tradition of Community Healthcare

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**For Immediate Release:**

## **Northwest Medical Center Becomes Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite**

**Albany, MO, June 20, 2014** – Northwest Medical Center (NMC) recently joined a growing number of Missouri businesses by becoming a *Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*. Breastfeeding friendly employers proactively support employees who choose to breastfeed their infants. They provide time, space and other benefits to maintain breastfeeding after a mom returns to work. Employers who provide these supports see a positive impact on their business's bottom line.

Employers that provide lactation support services report higher employee retention, lower absenteeism, higher morale, greater productivity, and reduced health care costs. Many studies have also shown improved short- and long-term health of the breastfeeding mother and her child.

"Lactation support programs are a growing trend in businesses today as a means of improving family services to employees," said Vickie Cline, NMC Human Resources Director. "With the help of grant funds, Northwest Medical Center was able to open a privacy room exclusively reserved for NMC Caregivers."

Upgrades to the new lactation privacy room were made possible by grant funds that NMC was approved for by the Department of Health & Senior Services. Upgrades include furniture, a refrigerator, new paint, decorations, and more. "This room provides a nice, home-like space for our breastfeeding caregivers to remove themselves from their daily duties and refresh their minds if need be," says Cline.

Over 70 percent of Missouri mothers choose breastfeeding as the optimal form of infant feeding. Yet, many of these women do not meet their breastfeeding goals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified returning to work as a major reason why many women stop breastfeeding.

The *Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program* is a collaboration between the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition. The program aims to bring an increased awareness about the importance of worksite lactation support. The program recognizes employers with policies supportive of their breastfeeding employees. Such policies provide a flexible work schedule for milk expression breaks; offer a private space, other than a bathroom, where the employee can pump or breastfeed; and ensure easy access to a safe water source and place to store milk.



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“We want our caregivers who are new mothers to know that we support their decision to continue breastfeeding,” said Cline. “We are extremely pleased to be designated as a *Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*.”

*Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksites* represent a wide range of employment sectors, settings and worksite sizes. To be designated as a *Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*, an employer must submit an application to the DHSS. Application materials can be found at <http://health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>. A listing of recognized businesses is available on the Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition’s website, <http://www.mobreastfeeding.org/>.

**About-** Northwest Medical Center has provided high-quality health services to residents in Northwest Missouri since 1957. Along with five satellite clinics and a full-service home-health agency, Northwest Medical Center continues its tradition of community healthcare utilizing leading-edge diagnostic equipment and boasting one of the top emergency room facilities in the region.

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