

Breastfeeding At Work Tough Task, Worse For Younger Moms

(NAPSA)—A new survey by the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) and Medela, Inc. reveals one-third (32 percent) of new mothers give up breastfeeding less than seven weeks after returning to work because of significant barriers. This percentage is even higher for those new moms aged 18 to 24, at 51 percent.

"If mothers can make it past seven weeks while working, our survey shows they are more likely to continue breastfeeding for six to 12 months. Companies should encourage breastfeeding with a lactation program not just at corporate headquarters, but throughout the organization," explains Irene Zoppi, RN, MSN, IBCLC and Medela's clinical education specialist.

Many work environments are falling short of supporting women and providing the resources they need to succeed at breastfeeding while working. According to the survey, the biggest barriers include no privacy, inflexible schedules, lack of refrigeration to store breast milk and insufficient or lack of company policies to allow them to take an adequate number of breaks to pump. In fact, while 60 percent of the survey respondents believe that the perception of breastfeeding in the workplace has grown more positive in recent years, 35 percent feel that there has been no change and 5 percent consider it to have grown more negative.

The survey also shows mothers working in retail or service environments were least likely to



breastfeed for six months or more after returning to work. Only 23 percent were able to do so compared to 42 percent of those who work from home or own a business and 31 percent who work in other environments, including office or classroom, factory or non-office and health care.

"There are so many health benefits to breastfeeding for both mom and baby," stated Elizabeth Battaglini Cahill, RN, executive vice president of NWHRC. "All new moms should have the equal opportunity to continue to breastfeed after returning to work, regardless of their industry or age."

To help new mothers transition back into the workforce while continuing to successfully breastfeed, the NWHRC and Medela are offering a free tip card at www.healthywomen.org. For additional information on breastfeeding, visit www.medela.com and www.healthywomen.org.