

## Creating Healthy Work Environments 2019

### Creating a Community of Breastfeeding Support at Texas Woman's University

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Breastfeeding is widely recognized as the optimal nutrition for infants and is associated with significant health benefits for both mothers and infants (Duijts, Jaddoe, & Hoffman, 2010; Victora et al., 2016.; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2011). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed to six months of age and continue to be breastfed to 12 months of age with the addition of solid food. The AAP recommends breastfeeding beyond 12 months if mutually desired by mother and infant (Eidelman and Schanler, 2012).

A majority of infants in the U.S. are not breastfed beyond three months of age (DHHS Breastfeeding, 2017). Mothers who are employed and plan to return to work after the birth of their children commonly report returning to work as a significant barrier to continued breastfeeding (Cross-Barnet et al., 2012; Dagher, McGovern, Schold, and Randall, 2016; DHHS Office of the Surgeon General, 2011). Approximately one-third of mothers return to work within three months in the United States and African Americans return to work on average 2 weeks earlier than mothers of all other racial and ethnic groups (Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel, 2005; Spencer and Grassley, 2013). Shorter breastfeeding duration is related to earlier maternal return to work (Ogbuanu et al., 2011).

Working mothers who breastfeed who receive employer support breastfeed longer than women who do not receive support (Bai and Wunderlich, 2013; Balken, Cadwell, and Fein, 2011; Cohen and Mrtek, 1994). In 1995 the Texas legislature created the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program which recognizes employers in the state of Texas who develop and maintain breastfeeding policies that support employees who breastfeed. Since 1995 over 3000 employers have received the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Designation (Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite, 2018).

In addition to workplace support, federal and state laws have been passed that protect a mother's right to breastfeed. The Affordable Care Act that was passed by Congress in 2010 requires employers of non-exempt workers to provide reasonable break time and a private space to pump milk that is not a bathroom (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). Most state legislatures have also passed laws protecting a woman's right to breastfeed. In 2015 the Texas legislature passed a law requiring all public state employers to develop policies that protect their employees who breastfeed (Texas State Legislature, 2015).

While attention to workplace breastfeeding support has grown significantly in the last decade, few laws and policies exist that specifically protect mothers who are breastfeeding students. Title IX is a federal civil rights law that protects women from discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Title IX does not specifically name breastfeeding as being a protected activity, but breastfeeding is related to parenting and pregnancy that are named specifically in the law. At present, Title IX applicability to breastfeeding students has not been legally challenged.

In 2017 Texas Woman's University (TWU) formed a lactation committee comprised of students, staff, and faculty members to evaluate and develop breastfeeding support on campus. The primary reason for the development of this committee was in response to several comments made to the Student Affairs Office from breastfeeding students who did not feel adequately supported on campus (A. O'Keefe, personal communication, March 9, 2017). The actions of this committee to date have resulted in a breastfeeding

policy that brings the University into compliance with the 2015 Texas law, upgrades to lactation rooms and plans for lactation rooms in new buildings, improved processes for accessing the lactation rooms, a breastfeeding class that is offered at least once per semester on the Denton, Dallas, and Houston campuses of TWU, and a University webpage that communicates the University policy, support offered on campus, and local resources for breastfeeding students using gender inclusive language. TWU received Mother-Friendly Worksite designation for all three campuses in 2018.

The purpose of this presentation is to present the work of the committee in creating a community of breastfeeding support at TWU. The process and lessons learned regarding: 1. Engaging university stakeholders in designing a breastfeeding policy, 2. Working with university facilities management in creating lactation rooms, 3. Designing and implementing a breastfeeding class for all members of the university community, and 4. Designing and launching a university community inclusive webpage. Statistics on lactation room use and results of student and employee surveys will be presented. Current legislation regarding breastfeeding support will also be reviewed.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Breastfeeding, Support and University

**References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

In 2017 Texas Woman's University (TWU) formed a lactation committee comprised of students, staff, and faculty members to evaluate and develop breastfeeding support on campus. The purpose of this presentation is to present the work of the committee in creating a community of breastfeeding support at TWU.

### **Content Outline:**

Content Outline for Creating a Community of Breastfeeding Support at Texas Woman's University

1. Introduction
    1. Breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition for infants
    2. Going back to work/school presents challenges to continued breastfeeding
    3. Review of Laws to protect and support breastfeeding
  2. Committee work developing a university community of breastfeeding support, process and lessons learned
    1. Developing a university breastfeeding policy
      1. Engaging stakeholders
        1. Navigating the policy approval process
      2. Optimal components of a university breastfeeding policy
        1. Behavior
        2. Environment
        3. Policy
    2. Lactation rooms
      1. Contents of rooms
      2. Maintenance and support for rooms
    3. Breastfeeding classes for the university community
      1. Topics covered
        1. University policy and support
        2. Strategies for continuing breastfeeding while away from infant
      2. Promotion of the class
        1. Scheduling
        2. Invitees
    4. Webpage development
      1. Contents
        1. Support for students
        2. Support for employees
      2. Importance of gender inclusive language
3. Conclusion
  1. Evaluation of committee efforts
    1. Mother-Friendly worksite designation
    2. Survey data
  2. Future plans

1. Photovoice study
2. Connecting with the communities surrounding TWU campuses

First Primary Presenting Author

**Primary Presenting Author**

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**Professional Experience:** 2004-present Board Certified Lactation Consultant 2010-2014 Assistant Professor of Nursing, Baylor University, Louise Herrington School of Nursing, Dallas, TX 2014-present Assistant Professor of Nursing, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX 76204 Author of multiple peer reviewed journal publications related to breastfeeding Author and editor of breastfeeding texts and book chapters 2016 to present Board member of the Lactation Education Approval and Accreditation committee.

**Author Summary:** Becky Spencer is an Assistant Professor at Texas Woman's University in the College of Nursing. She received her Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Kansas in 2012. Dr. Spencer has over 20 years of experience in nursing practice with pediatric, neonatal, and maternity populations. She currently teaches in the master's and PhD programs. Her research interests include health disparities affecting women and children and breastfeeding promotion and education in underserved populations.

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**Professional Experience:** 2003-present Student Affairs professional, non-traditional student focus 2015-present Executive Director, CARE 2006-2015 Director, Commuter and Non-traditional Students 2005-2006 Assistant Director, Commuter and Non-traditional Students 2003-2005 Coordinator for Commuter and Non-traditional Students ACPA (College Student Educators International) Commission for Commuter Students and Adult Learners. Directorate Board Member. (2011-2013, 2006-2009) Published attributions regarding issues facing collegiate parents: Insight into Diversity. May 16, 2018. Colleges Offer Tailored Services to Help Students Juggle Parenthood and Coursework. (Alice Pettway, reporter). Denton Record-Chronicle. Vol 113.No 271. April 30, 2017. Grad party for mom and dad; TWU celebrates parents earning degrees. (Matt Payne, writer).

**Author Summary:** ♣ Amy O'Keefe is the Executive Director of CARE at Texas Woman's University. This student life department focuses on supporting non-traditional students such as student parents, veterans and students in crisis. Over the last 15 years, O'Keefe has led webinars, national presentations and been quoted in media as an advocate for serving students with children. She founded a student organization for parents as well as created a university tradition celebrating student parent success.

Third Author

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**Professional Experience:** April 1999- December 2001 UT Dallas HR and Benefits 2001-Present - HR/ Benefits at Texas Woman's University I began my position as an HR Associate which was later re-classed to an Assistant Manager. I became the Manager of Benefits January of 2012. As the Manager of Benefits I administer wellness, medical, retirement and the Family Medical Leave Act for approximately 1800 benefits eligible employees. April of 2017 I was asked to join the TWU Lactation committee.

**Author Summary:** Angela Cagle is the Manager of Benefits at Texas Woman's University. Angela obtained a BBA Degree in Business Management from Texas Woman's University. She also received a PHR (Professional in Human Resources) 2001. Angela is responsible for administering FMLA and ensuring that TWU follows laws and policies related to the Worksite Nursing Policy. She also serves on the TWU lactation committee.