

CIGNA Corporation

Philadelphia, Pa.

CIGNA, a global health service company, is dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and security. CIGNA operating subsidiaries provide an integrated suite of medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy and vision care benefits, as well as group life, accident and disability insurance, to more than 46 million people throughout the United States and around the world.

In 1995, CIGNA implemented a comprehensive program to eliminate worksite barriers that keep women from choosing to breastfeed and continuing to breastfeed after returning to work. Today, for those mothers who breastfeed their babies and wish to continue to breastfeed after returning to work, CIGNA's program helps make the transition easier and healthier for mother and child. The program, **CIGNA Moms**, is designed to help a mother provide the best nutrition for her baby by making it easy to breastfeed before and after her return to work. Mothers receive ongoing support from a network of breastfeeding experts before and after the birth of the baby.

Program Components:

Private Area to Express Milk: On-site Nursing Mothers' Rooms are included in floor plans for CIGNA workplaces or if no room is available, an alternate space is provided. All locations have at least one room that either contains a sink or has one nearby. Depending on the number of employees, some locations have Nursing Mothers' Rooms on every floor or in the on-site health center (large spaces with curtains and sinks).

Breastfeeding Equipment: All women enrolled in the program are given a portable breast pump, a carrying case and all needed supplies. The portable pumps are necessary as some women travel frequently for work.

Milk Expression Scheduling: Flexible scheduling for milk expression needs are offered during regular break times.

Education: Prenatal education kit, classes and consultation with a lactation consultant before and after giving birth are offered. Literature on breast engorgement, breastfeeding and working, milk storage and collection, and managing nipple soreness are provided.

Support: Telephone support for breastfeeding women during maternity leave, a return-to-work consultation and ongoing support from a lactation consultant. Mothers also support one another, sharing stories and pictures in the Nursing Mothers' Rooms.

Before delivery, a lactation consultant talks with expectant mothers about what they can do to prepare for breastfeeding and what to expect when the baby arrives. After the baby arrives, during a mother's short-term disability or family medical leave, the lactation consultant continues to communicate with the mom by answering her questions, teaching her a healthy breastfeeding diet, discussing proper breast care and helping the mother prepare to return to work while continuing to breastfeed. Further, the lactation consultant teaches her how to properly store milk, gives tips on maintaining milk supply and explains how to use a breast pump. For six months following a mother's return to work, a lactation consultant will contact her every few weeks to answer questions and confirm that both mother and baby are doing well.

Program Impact*:

- Annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses for breastfeeding mothers and children;
- 77% reduction in lost work time due to infant illness, with annual savings of \$60,000;
- Lower pharmacy costs due to 62% fewer prescriptions;
- Increased breastfeeding rates — 72.5% at 6 months compared to the national average of 21.1% for employed mothers; and
- Recognition as a Workplace Model of Excellence by the National Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition.

** A formal study published in 2000 and conducted by the UCLA Centers for Healthy Children found that the program enabled mothers to efficiently express breast milk without impacting workplace productivity and did indeed result in substantial cost savings to the company. The program also accomplished its goal of improving breastfeeding rates among its employees, which are now significantly higher than the national average.*

With an employee pool of approximately 26,000, 75% of whom are women, company officials believe that the potential cost reductions in health care expenses and employee turnover more than offset the nominal expenses of implementing and maintaining a program that supports an employee's decision to breastfeed. The **CIGNA Moms** program is available at all CIGNA offices nationwide, with approximately 300 to 400 employees participating annually.

With so many employees participating, word of mouth seems to be the best advertising for the **CIGNA Moms** program. CIGNA integrates information about its breastfeeding program in its maternity program and wellness programs.

Employees with CIGNA Medical coverage can also enroll in the **CIGNA Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies** program, a telephonically-based coaching program, or use the March of Dimes "Healthy Babies, Healthy Business" (HBHB) program which is a multi-dimensional, Internet-based health education program available on the mycigna.com member website.

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Workplace Breastfeeding Programs: Employer Case Studies

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About the Center for Prevention and Health Services

Mission: Educate large employers about diseases and health issues in order to protect and promote health and well-being among their employees and beneficiaries as well as control costs.

The Center:

- Identifies strategies and develops tools to address health and benefits issues.
- Translates health research into practical solutions for large employers.
- Provides the national voice for large employers and links them with national expertise and resources.

For more information, e-mail healthservices@businessgrouphealth.org.

Issue Brief

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About the National Business Group on Health

The Business Group is the only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to representing large employers' perspectives on national health issues and providing solutions to its members' most important health care and health benefits challenges. The Business Group fosters the development of a safe health care delivery system and treatments based on scientific evidence. Members share strategies for controlling costs, improving patient safety and quality of care, increasing productivity and supporting healthy lifestyles.

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