Staying Connected: Pennsylvania Hospital

GENERAL FACTS
Size: 2,500 employees
Women of childbearing age: 43%
Industry: Healthcare
Location: Philadelphia, PA
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LACTATION PROGRAM
Time: Reasonable time that generally does not exceed lunch and breaks for up to one year after the child’s birth.
Space: 5 dedicated lactation rooms.
Flexibility: Employees work with managers to develop a schedule that best fits the needs of both the employee and the unit. 12 weeks unpaid maternity leave as part of FMLA policy. Some employees work part-time or per diem.
Support: Breastfeeding is encouraged as a means of promoting the health of both child and mother. Employees may attend the weekly breastfeeding support group, meet with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and make use of the breastfeeding “warmline,” a telephone support line.
Equipment: Employees receive discounted pricing on a rental pump and can purchase a breast pump at wholesale cost. Insulated milk cooler transport bags are provided.
Education: The Human Resources Department informs employees about the program and facilitates its implementation. Employees are given a breastfeeding information folder and access to intranet information pages. Breastfeeding is featured prominently on the employee website. Employees may attend free prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding classes.
Policy: Contact Ms. Ferrarello.

“We have a very talented workforce, and when they give birth, they become mothers, we want them back!”
Debi Ferrarello, RN, MS, IBCLC
Director of Family Education

The situation:
No policy but two lactation rooms. Need for ways to promote breastfeeding to staff on a limited budget.

The solution:
Create an official workplace lactation program with minimal expenditures. Distribute the policy widely through online employee networks.

With two lactation rooms already established and survey results indicating strong management support for breastfeeding, Pennsylvania Hospital had the potential for an excellent lactation program. They were concerned about the resources it would take to expand their program, but MCC reassured them that a good policy with good information can make a little go a long way.

During self-assessment, it was realized that almost half the workforce, 1094 women, are of childbearing age. Despite significant space constraints in the nation’s oldest hospital, additional lactation rooms were planned to accommodate their needs. The policy was finalized and information and support were pulled from the hospital’s patient programs.

“I was able to come back sooner, because I knew I could continue breastfeeding.”
Miriam Gonsky, PharmD

Pennsylvania Hospital supports employees through various avenues such as intranet pages, telephone, lactation consultation, breastfeeding classes and support groups. Because the hospital hosts breastfeeding classes and support groups for its patients, extending these to staff is a low-cost way to improve breastfeeding success with employees.

Staff welcomed the program and all five lactation rooms have been in use regularly. Even staff with previously skeptical views on breastfeeding are now committed to breastfeeding and using the program.