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News Release

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Ohio Department of Health Honors Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses

First Year for Healthy Ohio Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award

Columbus, OH – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) recently awarded its new Healthy Ohio Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award to 18 businesses throughout Ohio.

“Children that are breastfed have a reduced risk of many health problems, including diabetes, asthma, childhood cancer and obesity,” said ODH Director Ted Wymyslo, M.D. “We are proud to honor employers who are working to improve the health of our community’s littlest members by supporting employees who breastfeed.”

“According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, low rates of breastfeeding add \$2.2 billion a year to medical costs. Babies who are formula-fed instead of breast-fed tend to require more doctor visits, hospitalizations and prescriptions,” said Dr. Wymyslo. “These costs are significant enough that a 2010 study published in the journal *Pediatrics* estimated that the nation would save \$13 billion per year in health care and other costs if 90 percent of U.S. babies were exclusively breastfed for six months.”

Dr. Wymyslo also noted that supporting breastfeeding makes good business sense.

“Breastfeeding reduces absenteeism rates on the part of new mothers and increases their productivity,” he said.

Ohio is committed to promoting and protecting a mother’s right to breastfeed her child for as long as she chooses, whether or not she returns to work. Doctors recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months after birth for the optimal health of a mother and her child.

ODH, with the assistance of the Ohio Lactation Consultant Association and other breastfeeding advocates around the state, developed the Healthy Ohio Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award to acknowledge employers who establish and maintain comprehensive, high-quality breastfeeding support programs for their employees.

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The Healthy Ohio Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award will be awarded annually. 2012 applications will be available online next summer. For more information about the award and other ways ODH supports healthy behavior, please visit www.healthyohioprogram.org.

2011 Healthy Ohio Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award Winners

Gold Award Winners:

Cleveland Clinic – Cuyahoga County

Community Hospitals and Wellness Centers – Williams County

The Children’s Medical Center of Dayton – Montgomery County

Union Hospital – Tuscarawas County

University Hospital Case Medical Center – Cuyahoga County

Wilson Memorial Hospital – Shelby County

Silver Award Winners:

Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield - Warren County

BrookHaven Retirement Community – Montgomery County

Greene County Combined Health District – Greene County

LifeCare Alliance – Franklin County

Marty’s Kidz – Franklin County

McGohan Brabender – Montgomery County

Nationwide Children’s Hospital – Franklin County

Southern Ohio Medical Center – Scioto County

The Ohio State University – Franklin County

Bronze Award Winners:

Columbus Public Health – Franklin County

Cooper Farms Processing – Mercer County

The Scotts Miracle Gro Company – Union County