



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Healthy Mothers Workplace Award Recognizes Family-Friendly Businesses**

(San Francisco, CA. May 9th, 2013) In honor of Mother’s Day, a coalition of non-profit organizations, government agencies and employers is launching the **Healthy Mothers Workplace Award**. The award will recognize San Francisco workplaces that support parental leave, lactation accommodations, and work-family balance. These employers are leaders – improving the health and lives of our residents, workers, and communities.

"The Healthy Mothers Workplace Award is an excellent opportunity for local businesses to showcase their own mother-friendly policies and learn from others about creative ideas for lactation accommodation, work-family balance, and parental leave. I would like to thank all of our Bay Area partners for prioritizing gender equity and health in the workplace, which is very much a focus for our Department" said Emily Murase, PhD, Executive Director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women.

The United States ranks among Liberia, Swaziland and Papua New Guinea as one of the few nations that provides no paid maternity leave for workers. The Family and Medical Leave Act provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for parents to bond with new children, but only about half of the workforce is eligible, and there is no federal right to any income if they take leave.

“Too often workers—primarily women—are forced to choose between family and their jobs” commented Julia Parish, attorney with the Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center.

“Policies that recognize both family and work responsibilities are essential for women’s rights in the workplace.”

“My work, as rewarding as it is, is very hectic and fast paced” said Raichele Jackson, Hospital Assistant at UCSF Medical Center - Women’s Health. “Being a new mom and knowing that I have to pump would have been extremely stressful if we didn’t have a lactation room. The

lactation accommodations are clean and a quiet, relaxing atmosphere which gives me a total piece of mind”

Research shows the benefits of maternal-infant bonding for babies’ cognitive and emotional development and mothers’ psychosocial well-being, along with the benefits of breast milk for preventing infectious and chronic diseases. The opportunity for mothers to care for their babies largely depends upon their employers’ policies. These policies, however, differ significantly across job sectors and class – causing potential disparities in maternal and child health and women’s career advancement.

The **Healthy Mothers Workplace Coalition** is a collaborative of non-profit organizations, government agencies, and businesses, including the SF Department on the Status of Women, SF Department of Public Health, SF Small Business Commission, San Francisco Breastfeeding Promotion Coalition, UCSF National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health, USDHHS Office of Women’s Health, and the Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center.

“The San Francisco Breastfeeding Promotion Coalition is very excited about the launch of the Healthy Mothers Workplace Award” said Gloria Thornton, MA, LMFT, Chair, San Francisco Breastfeeding Promotion Coalition. “Our Coalition aims to address critical health disparities among infants by increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates, and we look forward to an award that sheds light on those companies that strive to improve the lives of their mothers and families.”

To help employers improve their policies and practices, the Coalition has developed a **Healthy Mothers Workplace Toolkit**, including model policies and resources.

According to Curtis Chan, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health, “Employers across the country are trying to follow the recommendations of the 2011 Surgeon General’s Call to Action: work toward establishing paid maternity leave for all employed mothers; ensure that employers establish and maintain comprehensive, high-quality lactation support program for their employees; and expand the use of programs in the workplace that allow lactating mothers to have direct access to their babies.”

The Healthy Mothers Workplace program was launched with initial seed funding by the Community Transformation Grant and UCSF Health Improvement Project. For more information, please visit [www.las-elc.org/healthy-mothers-workplace](http://www.las-elc.org/healthy-mothers-workplace).

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