



# Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

\*\*\* MEDIA RELEASE \*\*\*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: First Annual Breastfeeding-Friendly Business of the Year Award Contest**

## Cochise County Employers to be Recognized for Supporting Breastfeeding Families

In celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, an annual global event held during the first week of August, Cochise Health and Social Services is sponsoring its First Annual *Breastfeeding-Friendly Cochise County Business of the Year Award*. Awards will be given to one or more breastfeeding-friendly businesses from each of the following communities: Sierra Vista, Bisbee, Douglas, Willcox and Benson. All public and private employers in the county are eligible for consideration.

The Cochise County Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and community referrals to at-risk pregnant women, infants and children up to age 5. Numerous health and medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, encourage breastfeeding as the best infant feeding choice. Breastfeeding has many proven benefits for both mother and child which positively impact an employer's bottom line. These benefits range from health care savings to reductions in absenteeism and employee retention.

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. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, currently only 13 percent of U.S. babies are exclusively breastfed at the end of six months. By providing accommodations for nursing mothers, employers could possibly reduce their company's health care costs and lower their absenteeism and turnover rates.

Nominations for the awards will be accepted in two ways: short nomination forms will be available at all Cochise Health and Social Services clinic sites, or contact Marisol Robles at (520) 805-5618 or [mrobles@cochise.az.gov](mailto:mrobles@cochise.az.gov) and provide (i) the name of the business and (ii) an explanation of why you would like to nominate the business. Nominations must be submitted by August 16, 2013 to be eligible for consideration.

Employers selected as leaders in workplace breastfeeding will be notified on August 28, 2013, and a media release will be sent to local media outlets.

## About Cochise Health and Social Services

Cochise Health and Social Services promotes health and quality of life for all Cochise County residents through education, service and leadership. For more information, please visit our website at <http://cochise.az.gov/health>.

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