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Division of Public and Behavioral Health

NEWS RELEASE

Nevada's Ongoing Infant-at-Work Policy Success

Carson City – This morning ABC's *Good Morning American* highlighted Washington State's "Infant-at-Work Program Policy" that was initiated in June with great success. The State of Nevada, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) has a similar and longer record of such a policy that was enacted in 2009 when five moms and babies participated in the pilot program. In fact, the policy was highlighted nationally during a webinar of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO).

Since 2009, the policy has been adopted by many other state agencies with continued success. Some of the advantages moms have noted are an increased duration of breastfeeding (45% of the moms report breastfeeding at least 12 months – as compared to 19% in Nevada and 34% nationally), less sick days, savings in child care costs, and support from the division. One mom noted, "Working for a division that promotes breastfeeding and bonding with my infant has absolutely made me a better mother and a more devoted employee. I have continued to meet or exceed my work standards. I'm so grateful that I did not have to experience the guilt of not being with her when she is so young." A supervisor reported, "I believe my employee took a shorter maternity leave than she would have if she had to place her new baby in day care. She was also willing to work over sometimes, as she was grateful for the program and really wanted to show her appreciation. She also didn't need to rush to get to day care for a pick up. Not only was the mom happy with the situation, but so were her co-workers." In a survey of DPBH employees who had been directly exposed to the program (had an infant in their vicinity), over 80% had a favorable view of the program.

Why does this policy work?

- Larger and more diverse workforce (45% of the workforce is female)
- Earlier return from maternity leave
- Increased employee retention (22% of new mothers quit their job after their first baby)
- Higher morale
- Lower healthcare costs
- Attraction of new employees
- Low implementation costs

If businesses are considering adopting such a policy, the DPBH is excited to work with them on policy development and planning. Please call Nevada's Statewide Breastfeeding Coordinator, Lindsey Dermid-Gray, at lgray@health.nv.gov or (775) 684-4270. For more information about the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, go to <http://dpbh.nv.gov/>.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tracey Green MD".

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