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## Senior Capstone Project final research report : breastfeeding friendly businesses

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**Senior Capstone Project Final Research Report**  
**Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses**

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, lactation accommodation, community awareness, economic benefits, health benefits, support systems, friendly businesses, knowledge, acceptance, collaboration.

**Abstract:** As a Women Infants and Children agency Intern, I had the opportunity to collaborate with Salinas Business Union Association to pilot local business owners into finding ways to becoming breastfeeding friendly. Owners were given an educational brochure regarding breastfeeding laws, lactation accommodation and creation of breastfeeding friendly environments for current and future mother employees as well as clients. A breastfeeding friendly logo was also created to be posted on businesses windows to show the community of Salinas their support of breastfeeding. The main goal of this project was to raise awareness about the importance and acceptance of breastfeeding, as well as increasing lactation accommodation in the workplace.

*Summary:*

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a governmental agency located in various parts of the country. Monterey County houses four WIC agencies, with its largest serving location in Salinas. The agency's main purpose is to assist low income families by providing them with supplemental food and nutritional education. WIC serves low income pregnant, postpartum women, infants and children up to the age of five found to be at nutritional risk. WIC also provides breastfeeding peer counseling services.

Furthermore, WIC places a significant importance into promoting breastfeeding among their participants because of the tremendous benefits children get from breast milk. WIC agencies endorse breastfeeding as a valuable and beneficial method to ensure the health and well-being of infants. However, many participating mothers do not breastfeed for reasons such as: lack of support, insufficient knowledge about the benefits, and breastfeeding laws, cultural attitudes and mothers returning to the work force.

To target some of the reasons that kept mothers from continuing breastfeeding, I created and implemented a breastfeeding friendly project. This project addressed the need for lactation accommodation in the workplace, and breastfeeding awareness in our community by creating breastfeeding friendly businesses in Salinas, CA. The project accomplished to increase business owners levels of knowledge regarding breastfeeding and lactation accommodation through educational presentations and brochures. It also promoted awareness and acceptance of breastfeeding in public places by networking with businesses who agreed to post breastfeeding friendly decals on their business windows to demonstrate support to their breastfeeding clients and employees.

After implementing and evaluating my project, I found that businesses were willing to collaborate with the project as long as they benefited from it as well. I also found that this project opened a door for more implementation and outreach regarding the issue. Moreover, I recommend the agency to continue implementing this particular project, for them to expand their targeted audiences and seek more support.

***Problem Statement:***

Despite Monterey County adopting the 2001 Lactation Accommodation Law, and now being one in four counties in the state of CA with a Lactation In the Workplace Policy in place for their county, only 27.7% of mothers exclusively breastfed during 2007 (California Department of Public Health). Also, an increased number of mothers in Monterey County have recently discontinued breastfeeding because they had to return to work (WIC Survey 2010). According to the Division of Public Health, few employers have a workplace environment that promotes and supports breastfeeding (2010).

***Problem:***

The numbers of mothers in Monterey County who are discontinuing breastfeeding because they had to return to work has become a concern in our community. This is seen as a problem because more mothers are discontinuing breastfeeding before their infants turn six months when they return to work, therefore, not allowing their children to profit from the benefits of breast milk. Not allowing a baby to benefit from breast milk increases the risk of problems such as ear infections and pneumonia (WIC, 2010). Leaving the problem unsolved can have major consequences on the well-being of children in our community. According to La Leche League, breast milk has special antibodies that protect a baby from illnesses and breastfed babies have a decreased likelihood for allergies and dental caries. Also, breastfeeding has been linked to not only benefiting the infants but the mothers who breastfeed as well. Studies have showed that women who breastfeed have a reduced risk of premenopausal breast cancer (Kennedy, 1994; Lobbok, 1999). Furthermore, in a 2010 study published in *Pediatrics*, Bardick and Reinhold stated that, "If 90 percent of U.S. families could comply with the medical recommendations to breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, the United States could save \$13 billion/year (in 2007 dollars) and prevent an excess of 911 deaths annually, 95 percent of which would be infants." (Bartick & Reinhold, 2010). This suggests that not supporting breastfeeding means we are creating more problems that could be prevented in our society.

### ***Contributing Factors:***

There are many factors that contribute to a mother's decision to not or to stop exclusive breastfeeding for their infants. Three main contributing factors for working mother are, the community's lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of breastfeeding, the mother's lack of knowledge regarding breastfeeding regulations/laws and the employer's lack of lactation accommodations in the workplace (WIC Survey 2010). The first factor is common in many communities. Small communities are often unaware of the benefits of breastfeeding and therefore are not supportive of this. Many people judge a mother who breastfeeds in public or at a worksite, making it embarrassing for that woman to want to breastfeed her baby or pump their milk. Mother's lack of knowledge regarding breastfeeding regulations and laws is a common factor in our community. This is because Monterey County is composed of many low-income communities where women are often not educated on public health issues because they do not know how to read, or those around them do not talk about these issues. Many women who are undocumented are scared to ask their employers for lactation accommodations in the fear that they will get fired. Although, as a state we currently have a Lactation Accommodation Policy in place, many WIC participants were unaware of their rights to pump their milk at their workplace, or their right to ask for lactation accommodations from their employers.

Breastfeeding working mothers are protected under CA Lactation Accommodation Law that seeks three essential requirements to support breastfeeding working mothers; these three requirements are, time, space and support (Lactation Accommodation Law Assembly Bill 1025, 2001). The lack of accommodations in the workplace is one of the most common factors why women in our county discontinue breastfeeding. A study done in Pennsylvania showed that the most common reasons bottle-feeding was chosen included mothers returning to work (Arora, McJunkin, Wehrer, & Kuhn, 2000). Returning to the workforce is a particularly unique factor in our community. This is because Monterey County is known to be an agriculture sector, where a large number of working mothers are classified under.

Unlike mothers who work in other institutions such as offices, mothers who work in the fields have fewer chances of having lactation accommodations by their employers. This is because; their working environment conditions differ from those of other jobs. For instance, under the California Lactation Accommodation Law, an employer has to provide a comfortable, clean and private space for a mother to express and store breastmilk (Under chapter 3.8 section 1031). This accommodation is possible for mothers who work in offices or jobs that have a building because they might be provided with a room, however, for a mother who works in the fields there is no room that could be provided to her, since her working environment is outdoors. Not to mention that many fields are located miles away from the nearest building.

Another problem arising for mothers who work in the fields is time. Under chapter 3.8 section 1030 of the California Lactation Accommodation Law, an employer has to allow employees sufficient break time to pump, but many only have 30 min for their lunch making it difficult to pump. Women who work in small owner operating businesses such as taquerias or retail stores also have the same problem when it comes to having time and a clean place. This is because smaller businesses don't tend to have much room or accommodations to provide and because their owner operated sometimes they are not educated on the recent law changes in their community. Furthermore, it is important to address this issue because a breastfeeding policy in the workplace would greatly benefit employers. A breastfeeding policy in the workplace payoff for an employer is that they get to retain experience employees, mothers will return earlier from maternal leave and they tend to request less sick days because their babies are healthier, not to mention that they use their health care insurance less (Cohen, Mrtek, & Mrtek, 1994).

### ***The Agency:***

Woman, Infant, Children (WIC) provides supplemental food to participants of low income status; it provides nutritional education for low income pregnant, breastfeeding and non breastfeeding postpartum woman, infants and children up to the age of 5 found to be at nutritional risk. WIC also provides health care referrals to all of its participants. WIC was established in 1972 after the nation recognize that many low

income families where suffering from malnutrition. The primary factor was identified as hunger, and in a national conference one recommendation that stood out was nutritional needs for low income pregnant women and children. What started as a two year pilot program soon became a full establish federal assistance program run by the USDA.

In California, 82 WIC agencies provide services locally to over 1.4 million women, infants and children each month at over 600 sites throughout the State. Monterey County houses four WIC programs in four different cities, King City, Soledad, Seaside and Salinas. The Salinas office serves a majority of low income Hispanic families and is considered the biggest supplemental food provider in Monterey County.

The California WIC Program recently received an increase in funding from USDA to implement/administer a breastfeeding peer counseling program, however funding for local WIC agencies to target specific program needs is always low here in the central coast. WIC strongly supports exclusive breastfeeding due to the numerous benefits that breast fed babies have in comparison to formula fed babies. WIC has become an important resource for breastfeeding mothers and an educational tool for the community. A recent study indicated that 96% of the participants stated that WIC is providing effective and clear education about the benefits of breastfeeding, and that this advice influenced their decision to breastfeed their children (Murimi, Dodge, Pope, & Erickson, 2010). WIC program as well as other public health programs placed an important value on the continuance of breastfeeding and see any factors that prohibit mothers to continue breastfeeding as major issues and problems in the community.

### ***The Alternatives:***

One recommendation to reduce the lack of employer support in our community is to create breastfeeding friendly businesses in our community. By creating partnerships with businesses our agency will educate and properly train employers so that they can provide their best support to their hardworking employees. Business Case for Breastfeeding for example, is a comprehensive program already in place in other states designed to educate employers about the value of supporting breastfeeding employees in the workplace. More specifically, they focus on “how such support contributes to the success of the entire business” (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2010).

Business Case for Breastfeeding offers tools to help employers provide worksite lactation support. Creating a program similar to this one that targets our community businesses will successfully help reduce the impact that this cause has on the discontinuance of breastfeeding.

Another recommendation is to just continue doing what the WIC agency has done, that is breastfeeding awareness and advocacy. They do this by attending health department and produce packing health fairs to get the word out. This recommendation might be evaluated to see what is working and what is not, recommendations can be added to this alternative. So far this recommendation has help the WIC program develop relationships with the produce packing personnel allowing us to distribute informational material to their businesses for their employees. Other forms of awareness done by WIC is to participate in state and national activities such as the August Breastfeeding Awareness Month Walk. Participating in state and national events that support breastfeeding, captures the media and the endorsement of known politicians and artist, helping the issue become of greater importance, among these the governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is found as a supporter “this month, I encourage all Californians to support breastfeeding awareness, and I especially call on employers to implement breastfeeding education in the workplace” (Schwarzenegger, 2010). This form of advocacy and awareness has given agencies like WIC, the opportunity to keep growing and keep informing people.

***Project Description:***

My project focused on implementing a Breastfeeding friendly program in our community, more specifically the east side of Salinas. I implemented this program by piloting local business owners into finding ways to create a Breastfeeding friendly environment at work for their current mother employees and future ones as well. The main goal of this project was to raise awareness of breastfeeding benefits in the community and employer support. For this project I decided to join in pieces of both alternatives into it, piloting local businesses and creating awareness through outreach.

One main activity I used to target the businesses was to first make connections with the Salinas Union Business Association (SUBA) and present to them my proposal to



seek support. My first step was to conduct two educational presentations on lactation accommodation in the workplace. The first presentation was given to the executive committee and the second to the board members to seek approval. Once I built up relationships I develop a bilingual brochure on becoming breastfeeding friendly businesses and distribute them to the local businesses within my proposed geographical area. I personally visited the businesses to built relationship and networks with the business owners. “Meeting the right people can lead to a world of boundless opportunities (Wilice, 2008). A breastfeeding friendly decal was also developed and distributed to the same local businesses who agreed to stick the decal on their business windows to show support and promote awareness. Most of the decals where pasted in the class door of the businesses, others were posted on the windows. We made sure all decals were visible to the public. Furthermore, businesses who accepted to collaborate with me agreed to accommodate future and current breastfeeding employees by following the California Lactation Accommodation law.

Main goals and objectives that where accomplished by the project where as followed:

- Goal: Create breastfeeding friendly environments at work and public places in our community.
  - Objective: Increase Lactation accommodation in the work place; have at least 1 business accommodating an employee.
  
- Goal: Educate business owners about the nutritional value of breast milk for infants.
  - Objectives: Promote/support breastfeeding and have at least one five businesses willing to become breastfeeding friendly

*Methods:*

I conducted and worked on much of the workload myself, however I collaborated with other staff on certain activities as well as having support from my mentor at all times. I also worked closely at the beginning of my project with Jose Martinez, SUBA Executive Director in regards to building a relationship with the association. The budget for this project consisted of the money necessary to print the decals and to print the educational brochures. 100 decal stickers were order for printing for a total budget of \$190.00. Educational brochures where printed at the agency, but cost of ink and paper was estimated at \$ 100.00. Funds necessary for the project came from a recent grant awarded to WIC for breastfeeding policy implementation. Also, materials and supplies come from the program funding as well.

*Obstacles:*

During implementation I run into some obstacles that did not allow me to start implementation sooner. Obstacles that made the project implementation harder where things like, meeting dates, mentor on vacation, funding, and time constrains. I overcame one by one differently. For instance, since meeting dates for my educational presentations were post phone, I did not waste any time waiting for that dates to come, instead I used that time to work on other things for capstone to make sure I will keep things going. When my mentor left on vacations several times, I felt the need for support, in this case I turned to my co-mentor when I needed something for my project. And finally to overcome funding issues I re-did my proposal to meet the funding guidelines and avoid unnecessary waiting period for approval. For example, when printing the decals I made sure to get different quotes from printing services until I obtained a lower quote to minimize funding expenses. I also lower the number of decals to be printed, by doing so I saved approximately 3 weeks of approval time needed.

*Proposed Timeline:*

<b><i>Activities:</i></b>	<b><i>Date:</i></b>
Conduct educational Presentations	December 2010- January 2011
Pre and Post surveys	January-February 2011
Creation of educational brochures	March-April 2011
Creation and printing of Breastfeeding Friendly decal	March 2011- April 2011
Visiting local businesses to present project proposal	April 2011
Develop relationships with businesses	April 2011
Distribute brochures and decals to businesses	April-May 2011
Quantitative and qualitative evaluation	May 2011
Prepare results	May 2011

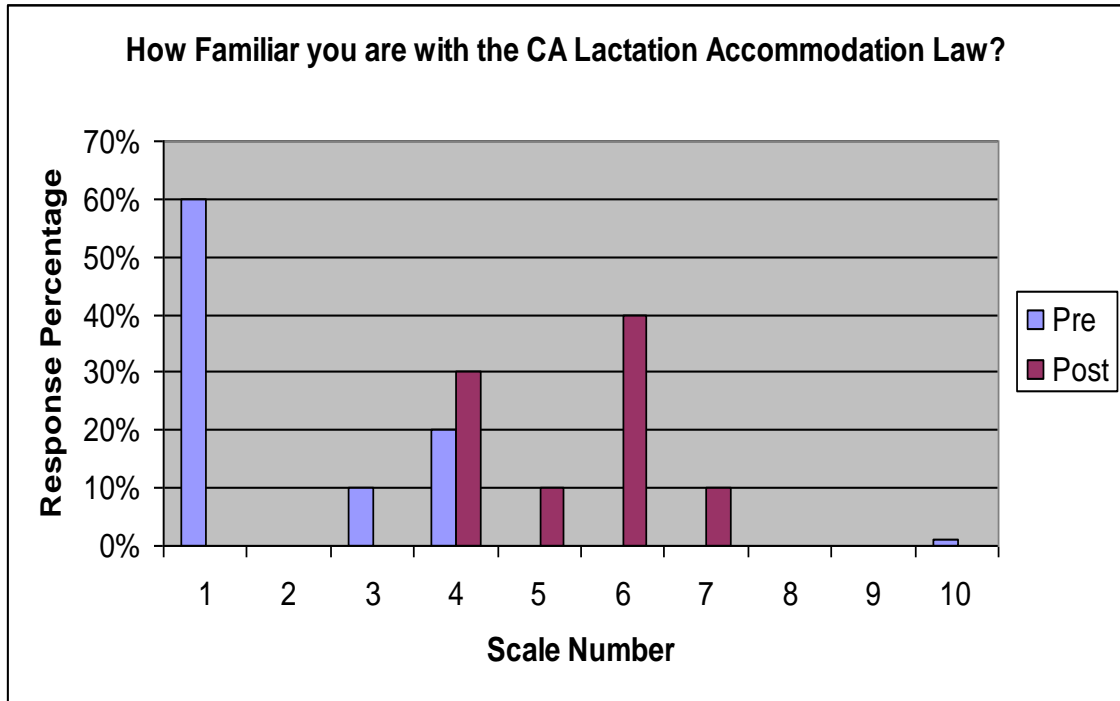
***Evaluation:***

Our evaluation plan consists of conducting quantitative and qualitative data analysis. A pre and post survey was handed to SUBA members on the day of the educational presentations. Prior to conducting the educational presentation the members were asked to complete a survey regarding their knowledge on lactation in the workplace to their best of their knowledge. During the presentation they were given red pens to be used to re-do/ correct their survey as they were being educated on the subject, this served as a post survey. Concluding the presentations the surveys were collected and questions were answered in regards to the presentation material. I then proceeded to evaluate the given answers in the surveys to develop statistics to measure the impact of my presentation on the knowledge of the members to see if the presentations were helpful or not.

*Survey Results:*

Figure 1 show that on pre survey 60% of respondents rated their knowledge at level one, while on post survey 40% rated their knowledge at level 6. Almost all members for the exception of one, showed an increase on knowledge the second time.

Figure 1: Question 1, Scaling



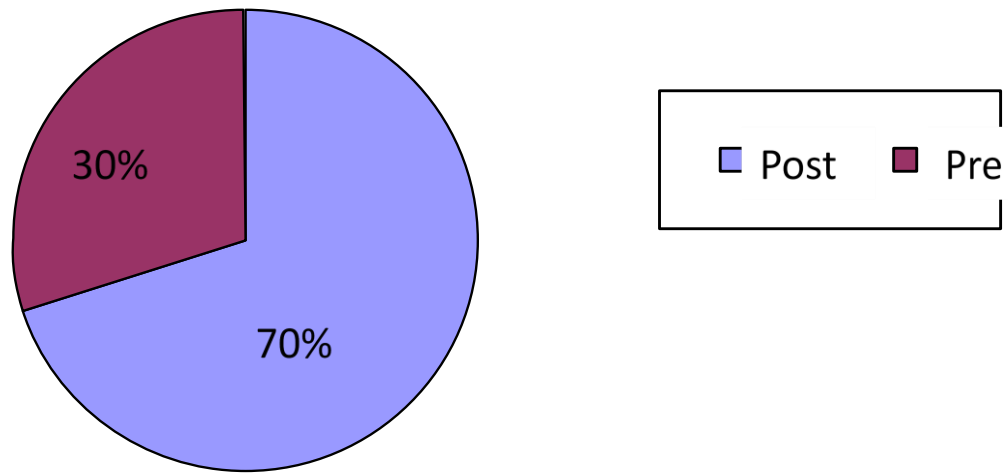
Note: Participants were asked to scale their knowledge regarding California’s Lactation Accommodation Law using a 1-10 scaling process, one representing low or no knowledge and 10 representing high knowledge.

Figure 2, consisted of a true and false question. On the pre survey 70% of respondents answered incorrectly to the question, while on post only 30% answered incorrectly, a difference of 40% knowledge increase.

Figure 2: Question 3, True or False

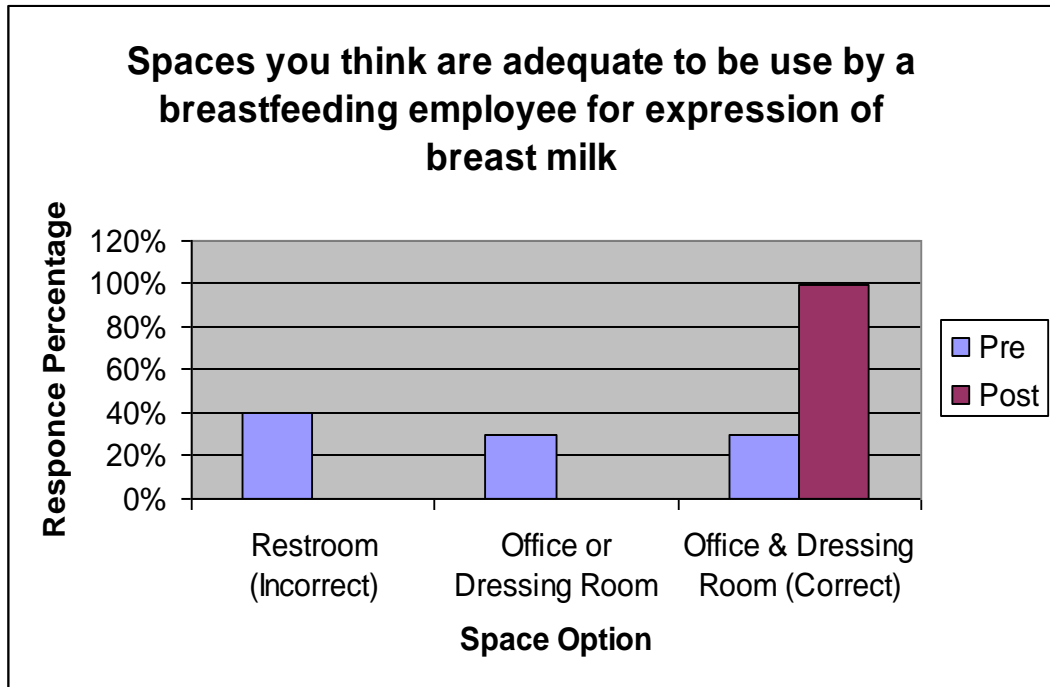
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**Survey: A breastfeeding employee can express her milk during her 5 minute break**



On figure 3, we are able to see that the educational presentations indeed did increase the member's knowledge on breastfeeding. All respondents answered 100% correct on post survey while only 40% did on pre survey a significant difference of 60%.

Figure 3: Question 5, multiple choices



Furthermore, for qualitative analysis I created a log with names of all businesses that collaborated with us, pictures of the businesses windows were also taken to show their use of the decal logo. After conducting my outreach I ended up with support of 40 businesses who agreed to become breastfeeding friendly. Twenty of businesses are located inside a Swatmeet area the other twenty are composed of different small owner operated businesses in the 93905 area code of Salinas, CA. Some of the businesses included two restaurants, a clinic, four hair salons, a travel agency, two bakeries, some clothing stores and other accessorial type of businesses. WIC will stay in contact with these businesses to valuate/ count those businesses who have adopted a lactation accommodation policy to accommodate their working mothers or who have opted to be a breastfeeding friendly business.

***Conclusion:***

Overall I was very happy with my results because they all showed a positive impact. For instance, the surveys indicated that my educational presentations did increase the member's knowledge on the issue. Also, after gathering all evaluations I noticed that I was able to actually not only accomplished my set goals and objectives but surpassed what I had set for myself. For example, I ended with more than five businesses becoming breastfeeding friendly. I personally believe I obtained good results because I was able to collaborate and network with different agencies such as SUBA and the Health Department into gaining support from them to implement my project. I also strongly believe it was successful thanks to the positive attitudes from all community business members whom I spoke to regarding the project.

This particular project benefited my agency WIC, by creating network opportunities and opening doors to implementation of other breastfeeding projects to come. It benefited WIC in a way that it created more links for them in the community. This project also benefited the target population, in this case breastfeeding mothers because know they are given more resources in the community to continue breastfeeding; for instance, lactation accommodation resources for breastfeeding employees who work the businesses who became breastfeeding friendly and accepting attitudes for breastfeeding customers who visit these locations. The project overall benefited the community by creating friendlier breastfeeding environments and increasing awareness on the importance of breastfeeding as well as increasing knowledge regarding the issue. One recommendation I suggest is for WIC to continue targeting and conducting outreach on more businesses, for them to think about the businesses in other areas of the city. Another recommendation is for them to follow up and stay in contact with the businesses who agreed to become breastfeeding friendly.

Finally, from my implementation of this project I learned a lot regarding the importance of awareness in our community. Awareness is essential when targeting a given problem however, it is not the solution it is only part of the many strategies that can be use to minimize a problem. I also learned that, when transmitting positive change one obtains positive outcomes. We might encounter obstacles along the way but if we prepare ourselves by creating alternatives and having back up plans we will be successful in what

we set ourselves to do. I had a great experience working with my community and most importantly I learned that change can occur because people are willing to collaborate and change behavior if presented with the knowledge and opportunities to do so.

### ***Application of project to academic requirements***

My project addressed three Major Learning Outcomes (MLO's) collaboration, knowledge of health and human services and finally professional communication. It addressed collaboration because for my project not only did I collaborated with SUBA to get approval of its members but I also collaborated with each and every business owner I visited into creating breastfeeding friendly environments at their businesses. My project addressed knowledge of health and human services because, it demonstrated understanding of a health status in a given population, and the contributing factors and it applied health education and promotion to address the issue. Finally it addressed professional communication because I had to communicate with professionals in this case business owners and SUBA members to explain and implement my project. Furthermore, my project reflects the CSUMB vision by creating a plan that works to help the working and low income population of Salinas by enhancing the community's knowledge to better serve their people.



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*Additional Documentation:*

**CSUMB  
Consent Narrative**

**Title of Project:** Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses

***Consent to participate in survey***

**We would like you to participate in a confidential survey conducted by CHHS undergraduates Jazmin Meza to be used for CAPSTONE project for CHHS 400B/496B at California State University, Monterey Bay. The purpose of this survey is to help the student evaluate pre and post levels of knowledge regarding the issue on breastfeeding.**

By completing this brief questionnaire you are consenting to participate in this survey.

You were randomly selected as a participant in this study. If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to confidentially fill out a brief survey regarding your knowledge on breastfeeding. The expected time burden is 5 minutes. The benefits of participating in this project include receiving information on breastfeeding laws to protect your business against law suites as well as helpful information in the topic that will benefit your business and community and a sense of satisfaction in helping us complete our studies.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you. You can choose whether or not to be in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If your participation involves or provokes any discomfort, please seek assistance from the CSUMB Personal Growth and Counseling Center or other qualified professionals.

Your responses to this survey are completely confidential. Information obtained in the course of this study will be presented via a poster exhibited to selected members of the Collaborative Health and Human Services department and possibly others from the campus community. Your participation will be completely anonymous.

If you want to know more about this research project or have questions or concerns, please call Jazmin Meza at 831-235-9755 or email her at [jmeza@csumb.edu](mailto:jmeza@csumb.edu).

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this survey.

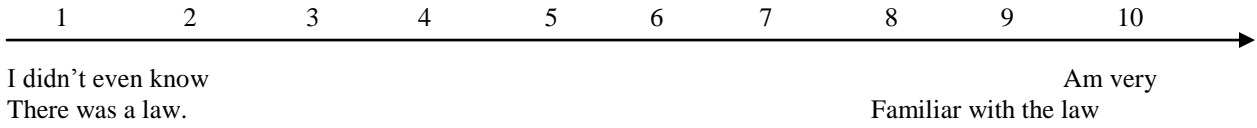
You will get a copy of this consent form. Thank you for considering participation.

Sincerely,

Jazmin Meza, WIC Intern

**Pre-Survey  
(Knowledge of Breastfeeding in the Workplace)**

1. In a scale of 1-10, how familiar are you familiar with the California Lactation Accommodation Law? ( 1 being not familiar and 10 being very familiar)



2. If you have fewer than five breastfeeding employees you do not have to provide them with accommodations to pump their breasts at work.

True       False

3. A breastfeeding employee can express her milk during her 5 minute break.

True       False

4. If a woman comes into your business and decides to breastfeed her child while shopping or eating, you have the right to ask her to leave.

True       False

5. Please circle the spaces you think are adequate to be used by a breastfeeding employee for expression of breast milk.

*Restroom*



*Office*



*Dressing room*



6. Storing breast milk in the same refrigerator where other employees place their food is unsanitary.

True       False

7. Some formulas are as healthy as breast milk.

True       False

8. Breastfeed babies are less likely to become overweight or to develop diabetes as adults.

True       False

9. Please list two of the benefits of breastfeeding:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Allowing women to breastfeed in the workplace will decrease absenteeism and may increase productivity.

True       False

Breastfeeding Logo used on breastfeeding friendly businesses

