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IDPH Launches Infant At Work Pilot Program

SPRINGFIELD – Based on the long-term health value of breastfeeding newborns and infant-parent bonding, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is launching an Infant at Work pilot program that will allow eligible mothers, fathers, and legal guardians to bring their infants to work in the early months of parenthood.

“The Infant at Work program will provide numerous benefits for participants, including healthy infant brain development, parental well-being, and critical bonding,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “Promoting health and wellness is a pillar of IDPH and we want to lead by example.”

The program, which has been successful in other states around the country, was developed with input from the IDPH Office of Women’s Health and Family Services as well as parents with infants, is designed to lower daycare costs, increase family supports, provide more breastfeeding opportunities for mothers, and give fathers the ability to be more involved with their babies. Moreover, the Infant at Work program will reduce the amount of time parents are away from work, help new parents manage the difficult transition back to the workplace, and ultimately improve morale at the agency.

Parents with infants between four weeks and six months of age are eligible to participate, depending on their job duties and location. Employees will be required to work with their supervisor on scheduling, work plans, and space accommodations. Participating staff will have regular evaluations with their supervisors to assess their satisfaction with the program.

IDPH is the first Illinois State agency to pilot this program. After 24 months, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services will evaluate its efficacy to determine if this program is suitable for other state agencies.

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