

# MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE STRATEGIES & SOLUTIONS

A WORKPLACE POLICY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR  
HOSPITAL LEADERS



## INTRODUCTION

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The health care industry faces a global workforce shortage. While the solution for this crisis requires a multi-faceted approach, an increasing number of health care organizations are establishing themselves as employers of choice and reaping the benefits in a time our labor force is experiencing dramatic demographic change. Generations X and Y, representing over 120 million, are more interested in making their jobs accommodate their families and personal lives and base career decisions on their quests for work-life balance.

Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the US workforce. Today, just 30% of families with children have a stay-at-home parent, down from 70% in 1960. Seventy-one percent of mothers work outside the home though only 21 percent of working mothers say full time work is the ideal situation for them. Twenty-six million working mothers contribute greatly to America, representing many of this country's most highly educated workers since women account for the majority of students in colleges and graduate schools.

Women make up the majority of hospital employees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 77% of hospital employees are women. Creating mother-friendly work environments is more than simply the right thing to do; it makes good business sense. Mother-friendly policies and practices are critical for hospitals to recruit and retain the best and brightest of the next generations into health care careers. Hospitals that establish mother-friendly workplace policies and practices employ mothers with increased productivity and loyalty, reduced stress and the ability to do what matters most—nurture their families and save patient lives. Research proves that lower mortality rates and shorter lengths of stay are correlations with lower employee turnover.

*The Mother-Friendly Workplace Policy Assessment Tool for Hospital Leaders* provides resources hospitals need to establish themselves as employers of choice for mothers:

- Assessment Checklist
- Action Steps
- Nationally-Recognized and State Models
- Cost-Benefit Analyses
- Sample Employee Needs Assessment

## CHECKLIST

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### ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

- Do you offer flex-time, allowing employees to adjust their arrival and departure times to suit their individual needs?  YES  NO
- Do you offer job sharing, allowing two or more part-time workers to share the duties of one full-time job?  YES  NO
- Do you offer compressed work weeks, enabling full-time employees to work a full week in less than five days?  YES  NO
- Do you offer health care insurance for part-time employees working less than 30 hours per week?  YES  NO
- Do you offer voluntary reduced work time, allowing employees to reduce their work time and salary by a specified amount for a period or permanently while retaining benefits and seniority on a prorated basis?  YES  NO
- Do you offer a telecommuting option to work from home or at satellite worksites while connected to offices by computer and/or telephone?  YES  NO

### CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

- Do you contract with a local or state-wide agency to offer child-care resources and referrals to ease employee stress of finding quality child care?  YES  NO
- Do you sponsor onsite or offsite child care for your employees?  YES  NO
- Do you offer Dependent Care Assistance, allowing employees to set aside pre-tax dollars for child care needs?  YES  NO
- Do you sponsor school-age child care before school, after school and during school holidays and vacations?  YES  NO
- Do you offer sick child care for employee children who are mildly ill or recovering from a health problem?  YES  NO
- Do you offer vouchers or reimbursement for a portion of employee child care costs?  YES  NO

### PARENTAL EDUCATION

- Do you provide parent seminars or forums to address common concerns facing working parents?  YES  NO
- Do you provide information to employees on parenting through brochures, a library, e-mails or a website?  YES  NO
- Do you offer prenatal education classes for expectant employees?  YES  NO

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## PARENTAL LEAVE

- Do you offer fully or partially paid maternity leave or temporary disability insurance for pregnancy?  YES  NO
- Do you offer fully or partially paid adoption leave?  YES  NO
- Do you offer unpaid parental leave beyond the federal Family and Medical Leave Act requirements of 12 weeks?  YES  NO
- Do you offer mothers phased-in, reduced work schedule when returning from maternity leave?  YES  NO

## BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

- Do you provide private lactation designated areas for mothers to express and store breast milk?  YES  NO
- Do you offer flexible breaks for mothers expressing milk throughout the work day?  YES  NO
- Do you provide access to a lactation consultant for mothers expressing milk at work?  YES  NO
- Do you have a written policy supporting breastfeeding women?  YES  NO

## ACTION STEPS

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1. Direct your human resources management team to complete the Workplace Policy Assessment.
2. Ask your human resources management team to prepare a presentation for senior management on the demographics of your employees and existing mother-friendly policies.
3. Discuss the presentation along with the results of the Workplace Policy Assessment in a senior leadership meeting.
4. Conduct an employee needs assessment of mother-friendly policies within your organization.
5. Meet informally with mothers within your organization for candid conversations about their observations and concerns about the workplace environment.
6. Establish an internal management-employee task force to develop a mother-friendly policy program and determine program features.
7. Establish sub-committees to implement various program features.
8. Train managers and communicate with employees about the mother-friendly policy program.
9. Implement the program features, making necessary policy and administrative changes.
10. Design an evaluation mechanism for periodic reviews of the program by your senior leadership team and board.

## NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED MODELS

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### **BON SECOURS RICHMOND HEALTH SYSTEM**

Located in Richmond, VA, this system of four hospitals has 6,222 employees. Mothers are provided with work flexibility options that fit their lifestyle. Employees can work part-time, flex their hours, compress work weeks or job-share. Bon Secours offers health benefits to part-timers who work as little as 15 hours per week. The system also provides three on-site childcare centers offering day, evening, weekend and on-call child care. Sick-child care is provided at a near-site facility. New mothers receive 12 weeks of partially paid maternity leave and may take an additional 12 weeks unpaid with manager approval.

### **MERCY HEALTH SYSTEM**

Headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin, Mercy is a fully integrated health care system with 4,000 employees in 64 locations in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Nearly 30 percent of employees have alternative work arrangements (flex-time, job sharing, telecommuting, and weekend-only work schedules). They also offer concierge services to take care of dry cleaning, grocery shopping, onsite oil changes, etc. Going beyond fostering a family-friendly atmosphere and treating each employee like family, the system has experienced a 12-fold increase in gross revenues and morale and employee satisfaction continues to improve. Mercy has been awarded the Bernard E. Nash Award for Innovation based on its commitment to flexible work options, is a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner, and has been chosen by AARP as one of the 50 Best Employers for Workers over 50.

### **CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE OF ATLANTA**

With 6,335 employees operating a network of pediatric facilities, this organization allows employees to work on an as-needed basis, along with providing options for flextime and part-time work. Three near-site child care centers are provided and employees receive an annual subsidy of \$1,040 to cover costs of the care. In addition to four weeks of partially paid maternity leave, new moms are given a baby shower with gifts and information on everything from breastfeeding to child care. When they return to work, they receive a week of free meals and this program has helped increase the return-to-work rate by nearly 30% in the past two years. On-site massages are also available around the clock for employees to de-stress.

### **CJW MEDICAL CENTER**

Located in Richmond, VA and employing 3,218, CJW offers a full slate of flexible work options. Eighty-four percent of employees use flextime and alter their schedules. Employees can also take a block of time off to spend with their children in June, July or August with manager approval. CJW subsidizes a child care center that provides back-up, before- and afterschool and summer care. Another facility offers sick-child care. New mothers receive partial pay for eight weeks and can take unpaid leave up to 24 weeks.

### **PITT COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

Pitt County Memorial has 6,221 employees and is located in Greenville, NC. Their nurses often work compressed three- or four-day weeks. An on-site child care center offers full-time and backup care. Before- and after-school care is also provided and vans shuttle older children to and from school. New parents take part in a 13-week pregnancy wellness class. Mothers, fathers and adoptive parents are fully paid for 12 weeks. Employee parents of special-needs children receive discounts on medical equipment, medications and supplies.

### **BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA**

Women make up three quarters of the workforce of more than 12,000 and nearly a third have children under the age of 12. Forty-seven percent of employees have flex schedules and 31% work part-time or job share. Benefits are provided with just 20 hours of work per week. The system has three on-site child care facilities and reimburses \$40 of the weekly cost. New moms get one fully paid week and four partially paid weeks of maternity leave, while dads and adoptive parents receive one fully paid week. Female corporate executives get 12 fully paid weeks. Other benefits include a \$10,000 adoption benefit, in-home backup care, leave sharing and concierge services like on-site dry cleaning, a beauty salon and meals-to-go.

### **WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS**

More than half of employees work part-time at this system employing 4,048 in Morgantown, WV. Nurses can work weekend hours for premium pay and employees can choose 8-, 10- or 12-hour shifts. Eighty percent of nurses are on a patterned schedule that enables employees to create their own schedules every four weeks. On-site child care is provided and a third of parents' costs are subsidized. Salaried employees receive four weeks fully paid for maternity leave and hourly employees receive four weeks partially paid.

## STATE MODELS

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### CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM

- Variety of flexible work scheduling options available including PRN and self-scheduling
- Benefits for part-time employees
- Adoption reimbursement assistance
- Option to use sick leave for family illnesses
- Lactation rooms
- Employee family activities and outings
- Flexible spending accounts
- Best Places to Work in South Carolina Award

### PALMETTO HEALTH

- Offers a variety of flexible schedules, including weekend only
- Has an on-site child care center
- Sponsors Kid's Kamp, a summer day camp for employee's children ages 4-6
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award
- Modern Healthcare Best Places to Work Award

### LEXINGTON MEDICAL CENTER

- On-site child development center
- Flexible work arrangements offering a variety of shifts to accommodate family situations. Weekend only work allows individuals in certain areas to work 24-32 hours on the weekend and receive full-time benefits and additional compensation
- New mothers (lactation) room
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace, Best Places to Work in South Carolina Awards

### SISTERS OF CHARITY PROVIDENCE HOSPITALS

- Provides childcare resource referrals and dependent care spending accounts
- Provides emergency childcare during disasters so employees can report to work
- Supports flexible work policies to include ten and twelve hour shifts and weekend or evenings-only options
- Offers an array of other family friendly policies and programs including adoption assistance, discount tickets to many family events, and hospital discounts for employees
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award

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## **MCLEOD HEALTH**

- Maternity and paternity leave can extend up to 12 weeks and McLeod can continue to carry an employee up to 12 months
- On-site child development center serving children 6 weeks to 12 years, including special needs children, and offers an emergency weather-related child care service
- \$2,000 financial assistance to cover adoption
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award

## **ANMED HEALTH**

- Offers an onsite adult education center for employees and family members and tuition assistance of up to \$2,000 annually
- Provides health education, prenatal counseling, a well-baby program, and a new mother's lactation room
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award

## **GREENVILLE HOSPITAL SYSTEM**

- Provides employees with flexible spending accounts, an education assistance program, and discounted rates for on-site elder care and respite care
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award

## **TUOMEY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

- Offers weekend-only work options
- Provides employees with flexible spending accounts and education assistance
- Best Places to Work in South Carolina Award

## **MARION REGIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

- Offers child care at three facilities with flexible hours, including weekends
- South Carolina Family-Friendly Workplace Award

## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

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Family-friendly benefits have been proven to produce solid economic results, including higher profits, higher productivity and lower attrition. Employees satisfied with their jobs tend to be more loyal, remain with the organization longer, provide better customer service and feel less stress.

Hospitals featured in *Fortune Magazine's* 100 Best Places to Work had voluntary turnover rates at 9%, while the hospital industry average was 20%. High retention minimizes costs of recruiting new talent. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement estimates that it costs \$50,000 to \$100,000 to replace one nurse, not including salary.

### A NOTE ON THE COST-BENEFIT OF LACTATION PROGRAMS

One-third of mothers return to work within three months after birth and two-thirds return within six months. Working outside the home is related to a shorter duration of breastfeeding. Only one-fourth of employed women with children under one year of age combine working and breastfeeding for at least one month. Workplaces can support breastfeeding through:

- Written corporate policies to support breastfeeding women
- Teaching employees about breastfeeding
- Providing designated private space for milk expression
- Allowing flexible scheduling for milk expression at work
- Giving mothers options for returning to work such as telecommuting, part-time work
- Providing on-site child care
- Providing high-quality breast pumps
- Offering professional lactation management services and support

Lactation programs are easy to implement and have very low operating costs. The lease of a multi-user hospital grade pump for milk expression is approximately \$65 a month and individual milk collection kits can be purchased for about \$40. Conference rooms, vacant offices, storerooms or dressing rooms can serve as confidential space and are usually available and not being used within the organization. Furnishing the room only requires a comfortable chair and small table or shelf and those items can be borrowed from departments or taken from storage. A small sized refrigerator needed to store the milk can be shared among the mothers.

Supporting breastfeeding employees saves money through the retention of experienced workers, reduction in sick time taken for the child's illnesses, and lowering of health care and insurance costs. CIGNA's lactation support program for 343 employees resulted in \$240,000 savings in health care expenses and \$60,000 savings in reduced absenteeism rates annually.

### TURNOVER AND ABSENTEEISM, AND PRODUCTIVITY GAINS

By comparing estimated costs with expected benefits, an organization can begin to get an idea of which options would be more cost-effective to implement in their organization. This type of analysis works well in assessing the impact of policies and programs on factors that are easily quantifiable, such as reduction in turnover and absenteeism, and productivity gains.

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## CALCULATING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COSTS

### STEP 1

#### Calculate the Current Rate of Turnover

- a) # of employees leaving per year \_\_\_\_\_
- b) average number of employees \_\_\_\_\_
- c) divide line a) by line b) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) % of turnover = line c) x 100 \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 2

#### Calculate the Annual Cost of Employee Turnover to the Company

- Employment Advertising—*all recruitment advertising and related costs* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment Agency and Search Fees—*fees to employment agencies, search firms, and recruitment consultants* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Internal Referrals—*costs for bonuses, fees, gifts, etc., awarded to employees participating in a company sponsored referral program* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Applicant Expenses—*travel and subsistence costs* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Relocation Expenses—*moving expenses and all other costs associated with relocation* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment Staff Compensation—*all salaries, benefits and bonuses of the employment staff involved in recruiting, interviewing, hiring and training new employees* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Employment Expenses—*all other related expenses, such as the cost of facilities, telephone, consultants, etc.* \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Orientation and Training—*include management time, trainer fees, materials, and other costs for training new employees* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3

#### Calculate Estimated Reduction in Turnover

- Use data collected from needs assessment surveys, focus groups, exit interviews, etc., to determine how many of your separating employees typically leave because of dependent care or other work/life issues \_\_\_\_\_
- Deduce how many of these people probably would not have left had your proposed program or policies been in place. *(Remember that employees often are reluctant to name child care as a reason for leaving. Therefore, your needs assessment may understate the problem.)* \_\_\_\_\_
- Estimated reduction in turnover: subtract line 2 from line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 4

Multiply the expected reduction in turnover (step 3) by the average turnover costs per new employee (step 2) to determine the expected savings in turnover costs.

#### Calculate Expected Savings in Turnover Costs

$$\frac{\text{reduction in turnover}}{\text{reduction in turnover}} \times \frac{\text{average turnover cost}}{\text{average turnover cost}} = \frac{\text{expected turnover cost savings}}{\text{expected turnover cost savings}}$$

# A MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR HOSPITAL LEADERS

## ABSENTEEISM

Businesses lose \$68 billion annually due to employee absences. Unscheduled absenteeism most often is related to family issues, stress and personal needs instead of illness. Johnson & Johnson experienced a 50% decline in absenteeism after offering flexible work schedule options and family leave. The average business with 250 employees can save \$75,000 per year in lost work time by subsidizing care for employee sick children.

### STEP 1

#### Calculate the Annual Cost of Absenteeism Per Year

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{(\# \text{ work days lost per year})} \times \frac{\text{_____}}{(\text{cost per work day})} = \text{_____}$$

### STEP 2

#### Calculate the Expected Reduction in Absenteeism

Estimate the percentage of current absences that might be due to child care problems \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3

#### Calculate Expected Savings in Absenteeism Costs

Multiply the annual cost of absenteeism (step 1) times the estimated reduction that might result from proposed work/life policies (step 2) to determine expected savings.

$$\text{Total savings: } \frac{\text{_____}}{(\text{annual cost})} \times \frac{\text{_____}}{(\text{expected reduction})} = \text{_____}$$

## SAMPLE EMPLOYEE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF MOTHER-FRIENDLY POLICIES

### CONCERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

1. How often do you feel you are successfully balancing work/family commitments? (Please circle the appropriate response).

- a. Always                      b. Most of the time                      c. Some of the time                      d. Rarely                      e. Never

2. To what extent do you believe your ability to balance your work/family responsibilities affects the following work issues? (Please circle the appropriate numeric response following each issue ranging from 1–Very Little to 5–Very Much).

a. Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5
b. Productivity	1	2	3	4	5
c. Morale	1	2	3	4	5
d. Absenteeism	1	2	3	4	5
e. Quality of work	1	2	3	4	5
f. Likelihood of quitting job	1	2	3	4	5
g. Likelihood of being fired	1	2	3	4	5
h. Other, please explain _____					

3. Does your current work environment have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your ability to balance work/family responsibilities? (Please, circle the appropriate response).

- a. Positive                      b. Negative                      c. Neutral

4. Do you believe that your employer is aware of your needs when it comes to work/family concerns? (Please circle the appropriate response).

- a. Yes                      b. No

### CHILD CARE ISSUES

If you do not currently have any children 18 years or younger, skip to question 11.

5. How many children do you currently have in the following age groups?

	# of children
a. Infants (newborn–18 months)	_____
b. Toddlers (18 months–3 years)	_____
c. Preschool (3 years–5 years)	_____
d. Kindergarten (5 years–6 years)	_____
e. Elementary (6 years–12 years)	_____
f. Teenagers (13–18 years)	_____

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6. Please circle the number following each item below according to what concerns you most about your child care situation (*Rate concern between 1–Least and 5–Most*).

- |                                          |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Finding care that meets my hours      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Being able to afford the care I want  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Reliability of my caregiver(s)        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Quality of the child care environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Finding a convenient location         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Safety issues                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Trying to make emergency arrangements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Other, please explain _____           |   |   |   |   |   |

7. Have you limited your work hours because you can't find adequate child care? (*Circle your response*).

- a. Yes            b. No

8. Have you had to take time off from work because of problems with child care? (*Circle your response*).

- a. Yes            b. No

9. Listed below are a number of ways that businesses can help employees with their child care problems. *Check all options that you think this business should consider.*

- Free lunch-time seminars on parenting and child care \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide information on local child care homes and centers \_\_\_\_\_
- Job sharing (*two part-time employees share a full time position*) \_\_\_\_\_
- Allow employees paid time off from work following childbirth \_\_\_\_\_
- Flex-time (*adjusted arrival and departure times to meet family's schedule*) \_\_\_\_\_
- Allow employees to use paid sick leave to care for sick children \_\_\_\_\_
- Child care program for children who are mildly ill or recovering from an illness \_\_\_\_\_
- Child care center for children of employees at or near your work site \_\_\_\_\_
- Financial support for child care as part of the benefits package \_\_\_\_\_
- IRS-approved plan to pay for child care with pre-tax dollars \_\_\_\_\_
- Child care program before and after school hours, on school holidays and vacations \_\_\_\_\_
- Spaces reserved in a child care center for employees' children \_\_\_\_\_
- Employees receive a discount on the regular fee charged for child care at a center \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the above three child care options are the most important to you?

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



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