

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness segment where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. This is Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Leslie Anderson. She is a certified lactation educator and one of the team members at our Women and Children's Health Center here at Lake Region Healthcare. Good morning, Leslie.

Leslie Anderson: Good morning, Katie. Thank you for having me.

Katie Johnson: Well, thanks for joining me. We have recently celebrated National Breastfeeding Week, a time that we lift up the practice of breastfeeding and it's benefits and, as we continue through August, it's also a time that we're celebrating a recent certification that Lake Region Healthcare received in regards to breastfeeding, it is the Minnesota Breast Feeding Friendly Workplace designation by the Minnesota Department of Health. So, I wanted to bring you in as our subject matter expert and talk about some of those things. Let's start with that certification. Tell us what that means for breastfeeding employees that are working at Lake Region Healthcare.

Leslie Anderson: Sure. Well, this is a new program that was developed by the Minnesota Department of Health to recognize businesses throughout the state for their efforts and their support for their employees. I believe that we've all heard of baby-friendly hospital initiative and that is where maternity centers practice the best breastfeeding practices with their patients and this just goes a step further in bringing it into the work sites. There is also an award through the Minnesota Department of Health for health departments, which would be our public health departments around the state and also child care providers to just giving them the best resources available, helping them through the process of supporting their clients and patients and families that they interact with.

Katie Johnson: So, for a mom who's breastfeeding, they see a workplace as designated as breastfeeding friendly, what does that mean? What does seeing that designation give her confidence in?

Leslie Anderson: Sure, and as a mom maybe even just looking for employment or returning for employment after a maternity leave, it tells the mom that the workplace supports their breastfeeding moms and recognizes this as important. It's a win-win situation for both the mom and the employer. So, the things that a workplace would have to have in place to get this award or designation, is they have to have a written policy and guidelines in place for support for all for their employees. And this usually is housed in the Wellness Department of a corporation and so it's a house-wide policy. It also would tell the mom that there is support from the employer, that she will be allowed time, break time from, duty-free break time, so she'll have the time to express milk during her workday.

It shows that the employer has some sort of education or would know how to refer

Need Help? <mailto:support@rev.com>

[Get this transcript](#) without table formatting

the mom to a place, like Public Health or another health care agency and then probably one of the biggest things is a place for mom to take that break throughout the workday and express milk during the day. So, kind of the four steps, if you can think of the acronym of STEP, S-T-E-P, that would be support, time, education, and a place. And of course, all of that is housed in the policy.

Katie Johnson: Sure, and Lake Region Healthcare has been recognized as having all of those and, as we were talking before the show, there's only 39 workplaces so far in Minnesota that have received this designation. It's relatively new but I think it's interesting that two of those 39 are in our community.

Leslie Anderson: That's right. Like I said before, this is a new program and so the word is kind of spreading throughout the state. But Lake Region Healthcare in Fergus Falls and StoneL in Fergus Falls are the two in our area that have received this designation. So, if your work site is interested in this or you would like to be a leader in implementing this in your workplace, you could get more information on the Minnesota Department of Health website. It's a fairly easy application process and it gives you guidelines to follow. Applications are only accepted two times per calendar year. August 15th and February 15th are when applications are due and then they're reviewed by a committee at the Minnesota Department of Health and then awards are presented after that.

Katie Johnson: So, a great goal to work toward for any businesses who might be interested in that. We, I think, most people are familiar with the benefits of breastfeeding both to baby and to mom when it comes to those kind of standard benefits. Is there anything new in the research about how moms or babies benefit from breastfeeding?

Leslie Anderson: Well, I think we have heard of the decreased chances of cancer, uterine and breast cancer in mom, decrease in allergies, asthma with babies. And now decrease in diabetes, kind of all linked to the obesity factor. So, all of those things with breastfeeding we're giving our baby the right start.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely. What about when it comes to pumping breast milk at work? There's some misconceptions, or maybe some stereotypes or some stigmas that are out there. What are some of those and maybe your advice as a lactation educator on how we can combat that?

Leslie Anderson: I think a lot of people think it's going to take an extreme amount of time and it does take some time and commitment on both the employee and the employer. But, if you have support in the workplace, that is probably the biggest stigma that people are afraid that they're not going to be supported. And if we can just get over that, and like I said before, it's a win-win situation if we have healthier moms and healthier babies, we are going to have less absences from work. So everybody wins.

Katie Johnson: Definitely. Your job definitely involves one on one work with mothers but also education in general about this topic. Are there some other things that are in the works that bring the breastfeeding message and collaboration and support out into

our community that you can share with us?

Leslie Anderson: Sure. You know, we have at Lake Region Clinic Services a childbirth educator, Jody Nuss, she meets with patients on their first prenatal visit and again at 28 weeks, so we have that continuity of care as they are beginning their journey through pregnancy and then through their hospital stay. But we also have outpatient lactation support services and newborn follow along program. And that has just developed over the last few years here also and we like to see all babies back whether they're breastfeeding or formula feeding on day five, six, and it's a nice transition between the hospital and their two week baby visit at the pediatrician. So we have all babies come in, visit with mom to see how they're transition to home, do a weight check on baby, a transcutaneous bili measurement, which measures for jaundice on baby and then help with any type of feeding issues that they may be having.

Katie Johnson: What a great, like you said, continuum to follow mom from the early stages of her pregnancy through that time when she's starting to really care for the baby and what a rewarding, fascinating job you must have. How long have you been doing this?

Leslie Anderson: Well, I've been here at Lake Region for 17 years, but I am fairly new to the role in lactation. Our lactation consultant has retired recently and so I was able to fulfill her role then, starting on July one of this year. So, it's wonderful. We just make appointments for moms before they're discharged from the hospital and they do a return visit and it's a great program.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely. Anything else on the topic of breastfeeding or the Breast-Friendly Workplace Certification for Lake Region Healthcare or other work sites you'd like to share with us this morning?

Leslie Anderson: You know, and I think there a lot of work sites that will be working towards this and we have a new breastfeeding coalition in Otter Tail County. It's called Partnership for Breastfeeding and it's throughout the whole county so that encompasses Perham Health and Lake Region Healthcare and we meet several times a year and can get information out to businesses and daycare facilities in the area so that is one place that you would be able to get support and it's either through the public health agencies or at the hospitals in the county.

Katie Johnson: And reaching out to public health or to the hospital that's closest to you, the best way to get in touch with the right people?

Leslie Anderson: Yes. That would be.

Katie Johnson: Leslie Anderson, Certified Lactation Educator, my guest today on Apple A Day. Thank you for the work that you do to help babies and moms in our community be healthier through the breastfeeding initiative and the Minnesota Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace designation recently received by Lake Region Healthcare. Leslie and Katie remind you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great

day.