



Breastfeeding: It takes a mother + a village.

Campaign Background:

The Richmond Health Action Alliance is a Healthy Communities Action Team Initiative funded by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth through Richmond Department of Social Services, and administered by the Richmond Healthy Start Initiative. The RHAA-HCAT seeks to reduce childhood obesity in the City of Richmond through policy, infrastructure, and environmental changes that promote a breastfeeding-friendly and physically active community.

Because women's ability to successfully breastfeed their children has critical short and long term health implications for our community, the Richmond Health Action Alliance conducted a social media campaign to raise community support for breastfeeding mothers during World Breastfeeding Week, August 1 - 7, 2015. The campaign was extremely well received and received nearly 100,000 combined engagements on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

How you can help:

On July 1, 2015, new legislation went into effect protecting women's right to breastfeed in public places in Virginia. We are reaching out to businesses and organizations to provide information about the new law and to invite you to support RVA's breastfeeding mothers by displaying a 4"x4" "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" sticker. The public will be encouraged to seek out the "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" stickers, photograph and tag locations on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages to highlight your business or organization's support of breastfeeding. Businesses will be recognized on the campaign website.



If you are interested in displaying a "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" Stickers, please visit www.rvabreastfeeds.com/business to request sticker to display on your business's window.

Information about the New Virginia Right to Breastfeed Law:

- A new VA law went into effect on July 1, 2015 which states: Right to breastfeed in public places. Provides that a mother may breastfeed in any place where the mother is lawfully present.
- This is a common sense law that received widespread public support and was passed unanimously by state legislators.
- Virginia was one of the last three states to pass a law to protect breastfeeding in public, so this law brings us in line with norms across the country.
- This new law means that business and venues may not ask a breastfeeding mother to leave, move to another area, or use a cover.
- Interfering with a mother's right to breastfeed is a Class 1 misdemeanor, which carries potential penalties of fines and/or jail time. However the goal is to provide education about the new law and resolve any issues before legal action is needed.

Breastfeeding FAQ's

How long do women breastfeed?

Doctors recommend that mothers breastfeed for one year, or for as long as mother and baby want, with exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months and supplementation with healthy foods thereafter.

Why is it important for women to feel comfortable to breastfeed in public?

It's important for the breastfeeding dyad to have a place where baby/child can calmly breastfeed, with minimal distractions. This is the best environment to assure that a baby is properly fed.

Why don't women just breastfeed at home and give the bottle when they go out?

It's important for young babies to breastfeed frequently in order to keep up their mother's milk supply. Otherwise, the milk can dry up. Most mothers and babies don't want to be confined to their homes for six months. So when they leave home, they need to breastfeed so baby has enough milk. That means that public spaces and people should be accepting of mothers breastfeeding in public.

Why shouldn't women cover up when they're breastfeeding?

Each breastfeeding dyad (mother and child) will know the best way to breastfeed. Some will feel more comfortable covered while some babies feel uncomfortable being covered. The point is that the breastfeeding dyad should be able to find clean, quiet places to breastfeed in public settings.

I'm ok with women breastfeeding in public but I think they should cover up.

Not all babies will breastfeed when covered. Some will throw off a blanket or feel hot underneath a cover.

Why can't she just use a bathroom?

Public bathrooms are unhygienic places to feed a baby.

What should I do if I'm uncomfortable if a woman is breastfeeding in public?

You can learn about breastfeeding, how good it is for mothers, babies and society, and how it's important for babies to breastfeed frequently in order to keep up their mother's milk supply. You can look the other way. You can give the woman an encouraging nod and smile.

Major societal impacts of breastfeeding

- healthier children and women means lower societal healthcare costs
- more women in the workforce with breastfeeding-friendly workplaces results in higher family income and healthier economy
- less environmental waste due to reduced need for processing, packaging, transporting, and storing artificial milk (formula)
- business impacts - lower health care costs, less absenteeism, higher retention rates

Helpful Online Resources For Business Owners:

The Business Case for Breastfeeding: <http://bit.ly/BCforBF>

The Surgeon General's 2011 Call to Action for Breastfeeding Fact Cheet: <http://1.usa.gov/1J4Cf1f>

Summary of Breastfeeding Legislation Enacted in Virginia: <http://bit.ly/1LdALE>

Join the village at www.RVAbreastfeeds.com
and on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @RVAbreastfeeds.