

The Importance of Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding at CSUN

Gabby Nadir

During a recent interview with current students and staff, we learned that the need for accessible lactation spaces is greater than what is currently offered at CSUN. This need puts a spotlight on our campus community to work together to create such spaces. In the last 12 months alone, the Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing's lactation space has been used a total of 809 times by 62 mothers.

Several efforts have been made on campus to improve breastfeeding support and accommodations for breastfeeding mothers returning to campus after childbirth. Although CSUN currently has four lactation spaces to provide students, faculty, and staff with the necessary space and support, there are still challenges and barriers to overcome. We must continue to increase awareness and promote education among our university's community.

One of the current challenges we face includes the distance of existing lactation spaces from certain parts of campus. In other words, we need to increase access to lactation spaces by making sure there is a lactation space within a reasonable distance from all areas of campus.

"It takes approximately 30 minutes, but it takes another 20 minutes to walk to and from Sierra Hall. I wish I didn't have to miss so much class time walking from one building to the other. I feel like an inconvenience to others when requesting a lactation space closer to my area of studies."

Mayra Medina (Current Student)

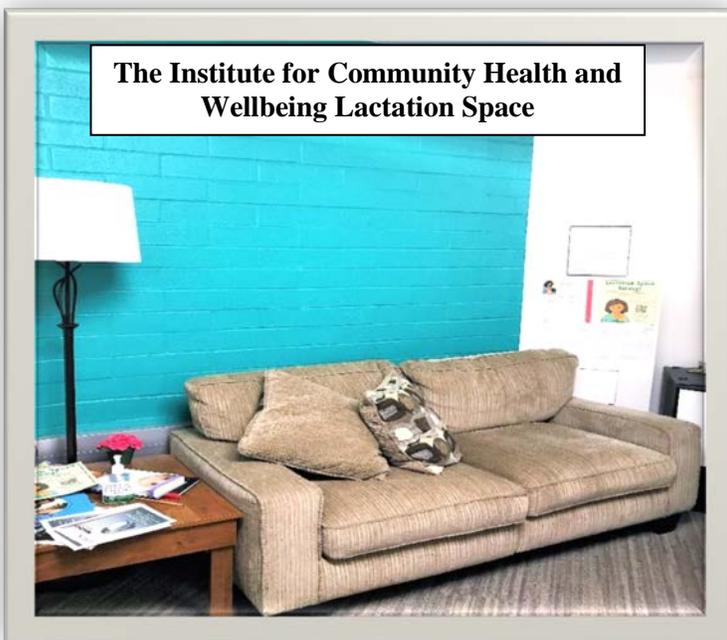
Providing spaces closer to the workplace will save time and prevent stressful situations that some of our students and staff are currently experiencing.

"It takes just as long to walk to and from the nearest location than to express the milk for my baby, and sometimes there is a wait for someone to open the room. A long time ago we had an office space, which was not ideal, but it saved a lot of time".

Anonymous (Staff)

Another common barrier is the lack of direct support of higher management in understanding the needs of lactating mothers.

Many employers do not realize that breastfeeding can save time and money. Employer benefits for supporting breastfeeding employees include: employees miss work less often because breastfed infants are healthier, which equates to lower healthcare costs; breastfeeding support helps employers keep their best employees so that less money is spent hiring and training new employees;



and breastfeeding employees who are supported in the workplace report higher productivity and loyalty. Overall, supporting breastfeeding employees creates a positive public impact.

“If I could remain in the same building it would be beneficial for my employer as well as me. It is very difficult to be in an environment where we don’t have the temporary support we need. It is very stressful and I feel rushed when I have to walk to and from the lactation space with limited time”.

Anonymous (Staff)

and a place (other than a bathroom) for mothers to express milk. ²

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of: ¹

<u>Child</u>	<u>Mother</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ear infections • respiratory infections • dermatitis • gastrointestinal disorders • asthma (young children) • obesity • type 1 and 2 diabetes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weight gain • maternal postpartum depression • cancers (breast, ovarian, endometrial) • type 2 diabetes • osteoporosis

The Journal of Pediatrics reported a study that estimated that, if 90 percent of mothers exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their babies’ lives, the country would save \$13 billion a year and prevent hundreds of infant deaths. Additionally, the research showed in Pediatrics found that for every 1,000 babies who are not breastfed, there are 2,033 more medical office visits, 212 extra days of hospitalizations and 609 excess prescriptions in babies’ first years of life. The cost for managed health care systems is between \$331 and \$475 for each infant. These reasons are just some examples of why the federal government created policy to reduce barriers for breastfeeding mothers. The law requires most employers to provide reasonable break time



The lactation room amenities can be as simple or elaborate as desired based on company resources and needs of the employees. Most lactation spaces begin with a very simple room and basic furnishings and expand amenities as needs grow. A basic space includes: an electrical outlet, locks from the inside, comfortable chair, a table or flat surface to hold pump, disinfecting wipes, and location near running water. Increasing the lactation spaces for staff will benefit students and the entire community. Healthier babies and healthier moms result in a healthier and more productive community.



Lactation Spaces Map

The Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing is proud to promote the availability of Lactation Spaces on campus

1 The Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing (Appointment Recommended):

The lactation room is located on the first floor of Santa Susana Hall. Please call (818)677-7715 to make a reservation.

2 Student Health Center (Appointment Recommended):

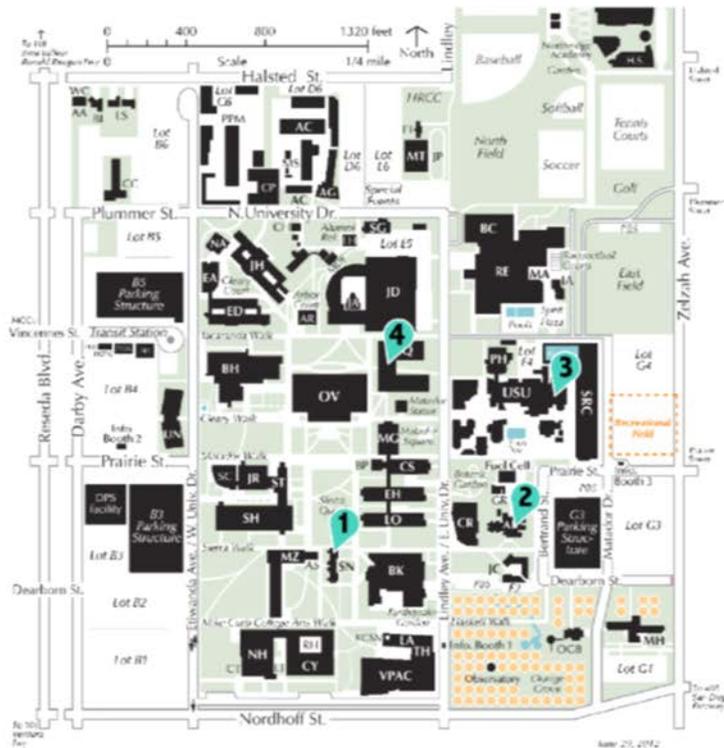
The lactation space is located on the first floor of the Klotz Student Health Center. To make an appointment, please call (818)677-3666 and ask to speak with the Clinical Support Unit.

3 University Student Union (Walk-ins Welcome):

The lactation room is located on the first floor of the East Conference Center. Upon arrival, please see a USU Representative for access to the room.

4 Marilyn Magaram Center (MMC) (Appointments Recommended):

The lactation room is located on the second floor of Sequoia Hall. Please call (818) 677-3102 to make a reservation. Upon arrival, please see a MMC staff for access to the room. The MMC is located on the first floor of Sequoia Hall room 120.



Lactation is the process of making milk for a baby and requires consistent, predictable removal of milk from breasts to maintain milk supply, for comfort and to prevent illness (Breastfeed LA 2013).



Sarah Sternbridge & Kruti Meisinger - The Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing - Spring 2017

References

1. Binns, C., Lee, M., & Low, W. (2016). The Long-Term Public Health Benefits of Breastfeeding. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health*, 28(1), 7-14.
2. Saunders, Jennifer B. (2011). Got milk? (IN BRIEF: MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH). *State Legislatures*, 37(9), 25.

For more information:

<https://www.csun.edu/benefits/nursing-mothers>
Fact Sheet #73: Break Time for Nursing Mothers under the FLSA

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>

[CSUN Campus Map – Lactation Rooms](#)