Time to Bond:
The role of breastfeeding advocates in state-level campaigns for family leave insurance

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Bi-Monthly State Breastfeeding Coalitions Teleconference
August 9, 2011

New Jersey’s Family Leave Insurance Program Overview

- Family Leave legislation first proposed in NJ in 1996 – many different bills introduced by both Dems and Reps
- No traction until CA passed expansion of state Temporary Disability Insurance program in 2002 to include family leave insurance (FLI)
- Used CA program as model to create NJ legislation (introduced in 2005)
- Enacted in May 2008
- Took over 12 years and work of strong, diverse coalition for it to become law
NJ FLI - How does it work?

- Up to 6 weeks of partial wage replacement;
  - 2/3 weekly wages – up to max of $559 per week in 2011

- To bond with new born or newly adopted child; available to both mother and father

- Costs: Employee paid; workers make a small payment into FLI fund – most they pay in 2011 is $17.76 per year

NJ Time to Care Coalition

- Organized in 2003 in support of family friendly workplace practices that provide “time to care”
  - Family Leave Insurance first priority

- Broad-based group of over 70 organizations
  - Community-based organizations representing women, families, disabled, elderly, mothers, children, and more
  - Researchers and academics
  - Unions
  - Small business owners

- Multifaceted campaign for FLI
  - Outreach and education
  - Polling and research
  - Media (op eds, interviews, press events, editorial)
  - Testimonies & Personal Stories
  - Legislative supporters
NJ Breastfeeding Coalition

- Joined NJ Time to Care Coalition early in campaign
- Central to Coalition efforts to highlight the importance and health benefits to new mothers and newly born children
- NJ Breastfeeding Coalition members:
  - Attended Coalition meetings and events
  - Provided outreach and education
  - Appeared in press and on TV
  - Provided testimony at legislative hearings
  - Provided personal stories
  - Attended meetings with legislators

What’s Next?

- 2-year analysis of NJ FLI program
- Expanded outreach and education on availability of benefits and how to access them
- Paid sick days for all NJ workers
Contact Information

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NJ Time to Care Coalition
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