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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Irwin Army Community Hospital awarded for efforts to make working and breastfeeding easier for employees

Fort Riley, KS, August 26, 2012 – The Irwin Army Community Hospital has received the Silver Level “Breastfeeding Employees Support Award” from the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and its *Business Case for Breastfeeding* program.

The award is based on proven and established standards to benefit employers and employees. It recognizes businesses that provide support services to their nursing employees, to include education as well as the time and space for employees to nurse and/or pump breastmilk at their workplace. The award, the second ranking of three sponsored by the Coalition, was presented by Brenda Bandy, director of the *Business Case for Breastfeeding* program in Kansas.

According to Bandy, the Irwin Army Community Hospital received the award for achieving a high level of support to their employees as outlined in the Coalition’s criteria. She said they provide a “silver level” pumping room, allow flexible time to pump, and have instituted a model breastfeeding support policy.

Pointing out that many nursing mothers abandon breastfeeding when they return to work because they lack the support and appropriate facilities at their place of employment, Bandy said, “We want to help change that unfortunate situation”. She cited research showing that adequate support for nursing employees benefits businesses through savings

in health care expenses, reduced turnover rates, lower absenteeism, and increased employee loyalty. Employers that have established support services for nursing employees have reported a \$3 for \$1 return on investment plus realizing a more productive working environment.

"Many Kansas employers recognize the benefits of supporting their nursing employees. We want to shine the spotlight on as many employers as we can for doing their part to make returning to work while nursing easier in hopes that will encourage more businesses to follow suit," says Kathy Walker, a pediatric clinical nurse specialist and Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition president.

Businesses that provide support services for their nursing employees can be considered for a "Breastfeeding Employees Support Award" at the bronze, silver and gold levels.

Applications are available at

http://www.kansasbusinesscase.com/for_employers/employer_awards .

The *Business Case for Breastfeeding* is a program to assist employers in developing or enhancing support services for their nursing employees. The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition is a non-profit 501(c) 3 with the mission of working collaboratively to promote and protect breastfeeding in order to improve the health of Kansas families.

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or would like to schedule an interview with Brenda Bandy, call (785) 477-4666 or email bandy@kansasbusinesscase.com.