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Kansas State Capitol Opens New Lactation Room State recognized for efforts to make working and breastfeeding easier

TOPEKA – At a ribbon-cutting ceremony today, the Kansas State Capitol joined a growing number of Kansas workplaces that support breastfeeding mothers by opening a new, separate and private lactation room in the Capitol building (Room 186B-N). In addition to the formal lactation room, updates will be made later this year in the family-use restroom on the first floor, to convert it into a suitable space.

“We are extremely proud to add the Capitol Building to the growing list of over 330 award-winning worksites in Kansas and to join the rest of the nation in recognizing the need to normalize and support breastfeeding,” said Brenda Bandy, Executive Director of the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC).

“We are pleased to see the Capitol Building leading the way in creating accommodations in public buildings for both breastfeeding employees and the public,” said Gabrielle Hellbusch the State Breastfeeding Coordinator at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

“I am very excited to see a lactation room available at the Capitol that can be used by both the public and staff,” said 10th District Representative Eileen Horn. “As a nursing mother frequently in the Capitol in 2017, I immediately saw the need for improvements to the spaces provided. I am grateful to my colleague Representative Jim Ward, KDHE, state and local Breastfeeding Coalitions, the Legislative Coordinating Council and Tom Day Director of Legislative Administration who invested time to help make this a reality.”

Adequate support for breastfeeding employees has been associated with cost savings related to reduced health care expenses, turnover rates and absenteeism, as well as increased employee loyalty. The *Business Case for Breastfeeding* is a program that assists employers in developing or enhancing support services for their breastfeeding employees, which can be found at <http://kansasbusinesscase.com>.

Staff and visitors to the capitol who wish to use the rooms are encouraged to ask volunteers at the Visitor's Center for help and information in locating the rooms.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Brenda Bandy, Governor-Elect Laura Kelly, House Majority Leader Don Hineman, Representative Horn, Representative Ward, KDHE Deputy Secretary for Public Health Ashley Goss and John Wilson, Vice President of Advocacy, Kansas Action for Children.

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[Pictured in attached photos:

Ribbon-cutting, L-R: Brenda Bandy, Rep. Jim Ward, Director of Legislative Administration Tom Day, Governor-elect Laura Kelly, Rep. Eileen Horn and son, KDHE Deputy Secretary for Public Health Ashley Goss, House Majority Leader Don Hineman, Vice President of Advocacy, Kansas Action for Children John Wilson.

New Lactation Room, Capitol Room 186B-N.]