



Center for Health Equity, Education, & Research

Boston Medical Center • 88 East Newton St., Vose 3 • Boston, MA 02118

P: (617) 414.6466 • F: (617) 414.2662

CHEERequity@gmail.com • www.CHEERequity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **Celebrating Mothers at Blackfeet Tribal Offices**

Contact: CHEERequity@gmail.com



Dana Pemberton cutting the ribbon at the opening of the new Tribal Office breastfeeding room.

On October 24, 2017 The Blackfeet Tribal Offices opened a breastfeeding room for employees to have a private and comfortable place to breastfeed their baby or pump milk during their work day.

Dana Pemberton, Personnel Director of the Blackfeet Tribe and member of the Blackfeet Breastfeeding Coalition, led the effort to open the breastfeeding room.

"This something that I feel very strongly about," said Dana. "When I had my children, I had to go back to work right away – like within two weeks of having them – and that made it really hard to breastfeed, or even feel like I got to spend time with my new babies." Dana hopes that this room will allow new mothers working for the Tribe an opportunity all women deserve.

The Blackfeet Breastfeeding Coalition is working to establish more support services for breastfeeding mothers and families. In August they championed the passage of a Tribal resolution that permits breastfeeding in public spaces without fear of legal charges for public indecency or sexual misconduct. The Coalition is also working with other employers around Browning to establish breastfeeding rooms and workplace policies to support breastfeeding.



Dana Pemberton giving everyone their first sneak peak of the new Tribal Office breastfeeding room.





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Cinda Burd, Consultant to the Center for Health Equity, Education, and Research (CHEER) of Boston Medical Center, works with the coalition as part of one of CHEER's projects called CHAMPS (Community and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices).

"Breastfeeding is an important cultural and traditional practice for Blackfeet – we have to reclaim it from formula companies and inflexible work environments. That's what rooms like this are helping to do," Said Cinda.

Members of the Blackfeet Breastfeeding Coalition gather in the Tribal Office's new breastfeeding room to celebrate its opening. (Left to right: Kirsten Krane, Dana Pemberton, Cinda Burd, Stefany Jones, Patty Welch).

Stefany Jones, the Public Health Nutritionist from IHS Blackfeet Community Hospital, is also on the Blackfeet Breastfeeding Coalition.

"Breastfeeding can literally save maternal and infant lives. The World Health Organization recommends exclusively breastfeeding an infant for at least 6 months and then continuing to breastfeed as solid foods are introduced until Baby is at least 2 years old." The Indian Health Service Blackfeet Community Hospital intends to open a new breastfeeding room to employees on November 16.



Dana Pemberton showing off the comfy chair in the new Tribal Office breastfeeding room.

