



SWOPE HEALTH SERVICESSM

Member Swope Community Enterprises

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Swope Health Services Employee Earns International Lactation Consultant Certification Becomes One of Only Fifty African-American Members in America

Kansas City, MO... Swope Health Services (SHS) employee, Valtra Brown, sat for her Lactation Consultant boards in July 2007 and received her International Board of Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) credential in October 2007.

The IBCLC credential is widely recognized by employers, colleagues and consumers as the gold standard in breastfeeding expertise. Members have passed a rigorous certification exam and keep their knowledge and skills up to date through a compulsory recertification program. Because of the universally acknowledged standard and reputation of this certification, IBCLCs are the only lactation consultants recognized by the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA) as well as all national professional associations for lactation consultants throughout the world. Ms. Brown is one of less than 50 African American lactation consultants in the nation.

“African Americans have the lowest breast feeding rate in the country,” said Ms. Brown, “I strongly believe in the importance of breast feeding and became involved in order to promote the benefits in this under-represented community,” she added.

Breast milk has long been recognized as the ideal food for infants. It provides all of the nutritional requirements for infants up to 6 months of age. Ms. Brown’s goals, as part of the SHS Community Health Project, are to promote breastfeeding and encourage mothers to nurse their infants. Further, she will work to broaden recognition and strengthen support for breastfeeding as a public health issue within the health care community, and to educate and create public awareness of the healthful, societal and economic impacts of breastfeeding.

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“Breast Feeding is an all-around societal benefit,” Ms. Brown explains, “It lowers the risk of ovarian and breast cancer for the mother, lowers rates of ear infections, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections for the baby and saves society as a whole excess health care costs attributed to inadequate breastfeeding.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, for each 1,000 infants never breastfed, there are 2,033 excess office visits, 200 days of hospitalization and 600 prescriptions. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Healthy People 2010 Initiative hopes to achieve the target of 75% of all infants breastfed in early postpartum, 50% at 6 months and 25% at 1 year.

Swope Health Services seeks to help develop self-empowered, healthy people in healthy communities by providing primary health care, outreach and behavioral health services throughout the Kansas City area. Annually, more than 40,000 patients are served through eight clinic and residential treatment locations. More than 90 percent of patients live below the poverty level. The staff at Swope Health Services works each day to provide caring support, medical treatment, counseling and education to not only improve physical health but to instill hope and self-esteem, improving the lives of individuals and families.

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