

To support lactating emergency physicians, consider these strategies

30 June 2020, by Kylie Urban



Pay transparency and diverse representation on hiring committees are first steps to leveling the financial playing field in medicine. Credit: CC0 Public Domain

In a new paper, published in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, three female emergency physicians share the need for emergency departments to adopt best practices and strategies to support lactating emergency physicians.

"In the often hectic and unpredictable [emergency department](#) environment, lactating physicians can find it challenging to have set breaks to pump," says Mary Haas, M.D., an instructor in [emergency medicine](#) at Michigan Medicine and the lead author of the paper.

Haas and her colleagues note that a [lack of support](#) in the workplace, including lack of appropriate lactation spaces and departmental policies, can impair an emergency physicians' ability to meet lactation goals and lead to early cessation of breastfeeding.

The authors call for three broad categories of strategies—time, space and support—including tactics within each, that lactating physicians, their

colleagues and departmental leadership can implement. For example, in the time category, the authors note that lactating physicians should set telephone reminders to pump, colleagues can recognize the need for lactating physicians to pump every three hours and departmental leadership can allow flexibility in clinical scheduling.

"It truly 'takes a village' to support lactating mothers," Haas says. "We hope this paper showcases the need for all parties in emergency medicine to be involved and supportive of our lactating colleagues."

More information: Mary R.C. Haas et al, Breast Practices: Strategies to Support Lactating Emergency Physicians, *Annals of Emergency Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.annemergmed.2020.01.012](#)

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