

April 26, 2021, Advisory Group Meeting

Notes

9:30-9:50 am

Welcome & Round Robin Introductions

Welcome Nikki as our new Chair for AG & a big thank you!

Welcome Jill Wilson to her first AG meeting!

ADVISORY GROUP (AG) MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:

Jessica Allred (Winona Co.); Nikki Bennett (St. Louis Co.); Maggie Domski (Washington Co.); Jill Wilson (Hennepin); Katlyn Hubbard (Becker Co.); Amber Koski (Pine Co.); Miriam Lindblad (Countryside); Marlee Morrison (Hubbard Co.); Wendy O'Leary (Olmsted Co.); Stephanie Olson (Polk Co.); Arlin Penner (Nicollet Co.); Teresa Cooling (Watonwan); Wendy Schoon (Otter Tail Co.); Amber Converse (Dodge Co.) and Kris Klopp (Mille Lacs Co.)

AG MEMBERS ABSENT: Amy Caron (Dodge/Steele CHB); Lenora Yellow Bird (White Earth Reservation).

MDH STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Kate Franken, WIC Director; Tina Breitenbach, Breastfeeding, Training, & Communications Unit Supervisor; Rebecca Gruenes, Nutrition & Clinic Services Unit Supervisor; Tami Matti, MIS & Data Unit Supervisor; Jessie Zins, Food Delivery Unit Supervisor, and Tammie Edmundson, Financial Analyst

9:50 – 9:55 am

State Staff Updates

Breastfeeding/Training/Communications Unit -

- Communications Coordinator – just finished interviews, hoping to have someone on board in a month. This position will be in the Breastfeeding, Training, and Communications Unit. This is a new position to the state WIC office team.
- MOM Policy/Civil Rights position – right now in HR audit due to job reclassification.

Food Delivery Unit positions

- In process of hiring the WIC Vendor Training and Support Manager vacancy – Emily Gomez's former position.
- Hired Program Internal Auditor Specialist position. Jessie announced that Ahmed Mohamed is the new hire.

9:55 – 10:10 am

Funding Workgroup: discussion & decisions

final changes

Kate reviewed WIC Funding Decisions document.

Background – a workgroup formed w/some LA staff & MDH staff and began meeting in 2019 to focus on the current WIC LA funding process, consider other options and examine data related to operations. The last meeting was end of 2019. Decisions were made January 2020, but with the pandemic & grants being pushed out another year, the implementation was delayed. MDH staff met in early 2021 to review decisions made and finalize items for the new grant cycle. **See WIC Funding Decisions document for additional details.**

10:10-10:15

Everyday Hero & Shelia Farnan Awards

Shelia Farnan Award – Information was in the April 7th WU. **AG decides the winner.** There are generally 4 AG members & 2 MDH staff that are involved in the decision. Tina will send an email asking for four AG members to be on the committee. **Deadline for nominations is June 1st.**

Everyday Hero –information will be sent in the May 5th WU w/details.

One Everyday Hero award winner per region.

May 5th WU will have nomination forms & information in the memo.

June 16th all nominations will be due to Regional Reps.

By Friday July 16th – all nominations, support letters & ballots for the region will be sent by AG members to LA WIC Coordinators in Region for voting.

Ballots are to be returned by August 4th. First week in August WIC AG Reps will notify LA WIC Coordinators & MDH WIC of the Everyday Hero from their Region.

Tina will send AG members information directly on this as well.

10:15-10:45 am

Reports

Participation Trends during COVID

Data from 2020 shows changes in participation in MN WIC.

During 2020 in MN WIC:

- Unduplicated counts decreased but monthly participation increased, especially among children.
- Recertifications increased, but new certifications remained stable. March, 2020 showed a large increase in recertifications.
- Fewer children dropped off of WIC, especially after one year of participation.
- March and April saw a return of dropped off children to WIC

Preliminary data for the first quarter of CY 2021 indicate:

- Monthly participation is decreasing in a pattern similar to previous years

- Drop off rates continue to decline

The powerpoint with notes will be available in infoview under Documents→Folders→Participation Presentations in the near future.

Agency-level data on monthly participation can be found in the Year to Date Participation and Outlays Report in HuBERT. Data on unduplicated participation are available online. Drop off data and certification data by agency will be available in infoview in the near future.

A mailing was sent out to 75,000 potentially WIC eligible households that are not on WIC in mid April. A pivot table is available with counts by zip code and city under Documents→Folders→Participation Presentations.

10:45-10:50 am

Winnie Update

Winnie development is delayed.

Timeline – uncertain how this is impacted at this point.

Pilot & UAT are delayed.

We should have a better idea of any necessary timeline adjustments in May and will communicate those through the WINNIE the Scoop Newsletter.

10:50-10:55 am

Conference Update

8:00 Welcome and announcements: **Kate Franken/ Tina Breitenbach -MDH WIC Program**

8:35 Wellness/connection/community Topic Speaker: **Adrian & Ayolanda Mack -Black Family Blueprint**

- Pre-recorded Presentation

9:10 Introduction to WINNIE: **Tami Matti -MDH WIC Program**

10:05 Maternal Health/Breastfeeding Topic Speaker: **Camie Goldhammer, MSW, LICSW, IBCLC**

- Pre-recorded Presentation
- Live Q&A

11:40 Awards

12:10 Lunch

12:40 -2:10 Child Nutrition Topic Speaker- **Jennifer Anderson, MSPH, RDN, LD -Kids Eat in Color**

- Pre-recorded Presentation
- Live Q&A

2:15 Infant Nutrition Topic Speaker- **Jane Heinig, PhD, IBCLC -UC Davis Human Lactation Center**

- Pre-recorded Presentation

- Live Q&A

3:50 Wellness Topic Speaker- **Jason & Kim Kotecki -Escape Adulthood**

- Pre-recorded Presentation

4:20 Wrap-up

10:55-11:10 am

Break

11:10 – 11:25 am

Increase in CVB promotion –ask for ideas or suggestions

A workgroup has formed at the state office to discuss communication about the increase in fruit/vegetable CVB with various stakeholders including:

- Participants. Considering App messages and social media messages (FB, Twitter, Instagram). Also thinking about how we might reach those that dropped off of WIC and how to use this increase as an incentive to get families back.
- Maternal Child Health Programs within MDH such as Home Visiting, Head Start and C & TC.

Resources for LAs are available. An [Increased Fruit and Vegetable Benefits: Talking Points for WIC Staff](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/2021/topic/0331fruitveg.pdf>) handout was shared in the March 31 Wednesday Update. It gives ways to encourage participants to fully utilize the increase in benefits. A handout is being developed for participants that will be translated into Spanish and Somali. It encourages different ways participants can use fresh and frozen produce along with recipe ideas. This will be posted to the website and participants will be able to access it through the App. Watch the Wednesday Update for more details. NWA announced a [CVB Messaging Toolkit for WIC Community and Partners](#) (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YGsNJbvLeKaimrBPoIUPlJzSGocA6le?eType=EmailBroadcastContent&eld=fe530e28-aa8a-43d3-850d-dfab038370f9>) in this week's Monday Update for social media ideas.

Ideas/thoughts from AG members

-Possibly look at adding a link to U of M extension/other recipes.

-Promote within your own LA (i.e., within county and different departments, C&TC, Head Start, public health, home visiting)

-Social media – LA can use NWA tool kit that is in the Monday Morning Report. There are graphics and messages ready to use in the kit.

-One LA is linking to the Nutrition Ed Card – Eating more F/V.

11:25-12:05 pm

Health Equity – ideas/input on how we can help support local agencies. How are LAs addressing Health Equity? How can we do a better job as a program to support health equity.

Kate led the discussion. She asked agencies to share about activities addressing Health Equity at the local level and how the state agency might support them in their efforts and what the

state agency can do to support Health Equity. During the discussion, general themes emerged including:

Hiring/WIC workforce

- Hire/recruiting diverse staff
- Encourage schools/universities to direct students to PH

Language needs –

- App
- Resources
- Website
- Interpreters

Technology Advancements

- eWIC
- phone appointments
- remote work

Easy Access and Options Offered

- Flexible appointment times
 - Days offered
 - Hours available outside participant work schedules
 - Curbside pick-up
- Meet participants where they are at and what works best for them

Staff Training

- Diversity and Inclusion training
- Facilitated discussion at staff meetings
- Staff involved in workgroups at county to share WIC's perspective on topic
- Address and inform local policy and procedures

Data Needs

Transportation

- Rural
- Urban/suburban

It was discussed that this topic is a “work in progress” and members agreed that it should be a standing AG agenda item for discussion at each meeting. These themes will need further discussion to develop local and state level plans.

12:05-12:25 pm

Discussion about how to best to prepare staff for working back in WIC.

Any staff fully reassigned to COVID work & no WIC time in past year?

Strategize/discuss ideas/suggestions to make an easier transition back.

Summary of AG member comments

One agency expressed a concern about WIC staff that have been fully reassigned to COVID duties and how to prepare and retrain them once we return to WIC in person services. It appears this isn't a wide-spread issue among other agencies at AG, most staff were not fully reassigned to COVID work. If there are concerns about retraining staff, an agency can refer to

the new staff training checklist or ask your state WIC consultant for ideas. Another idea is to review the benefit issuance modules (approximately 4 hours).

Taking time to review the [WIC In-Person Clinic Operations During COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/moyr/2020/topic/covid19reopen.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wedupdate/moyr/2020/topic/covid19reopen.pdf>) will also be helpful.

Agencies shared some thoughts/comments as they are planning for adjustments to in person work and thinking of ways to support staff and even supervisors when return to in person services.

Most agencies are thinking about what scheduling will look like when services return and mentioned the importance of staff input. There is interest in keeping phone visits in some capacity. Might have to adjust appointment times in the beginning to allow for participants that may be more talkative and for staff to adjust to all the components again. Participants have begun to ask when they will come back in person and some agencies are hearing participants miss coming in. Some agencies are exploring a staff hybrid model where some staff take measurements in person and others might finish appointments over the phone.

Some challenges were noted that many staff like remote services and so do participants.

There was concern expressed over potentially expired cuvettes and will the supply meet the demand when LAs need them or will there be delays when ordering. At this time, HemoCue mentions there are no delays in ordering, but this could change depending on the timing and quantity of orders placed when in-person services resume.

There is interest in seeing data from the online survey about what participants like in regard to in-person and remote services. We anticipate having results from the survey later this summer.

12:25 – 12:30 pm

Agenda Items for Monday July 26, 2021 Meeting

Health Equity

Participant Survey Results

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program 85 E 7th Place, PO BOX 64882, ST PAUL MN 55164-0882; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us; To obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942

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