

July 25, 2022, Advisory Group Meeting

Notes

ADVISORY GROUP (AG) MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:

Chair - Nikki Bennett (St. Louis Co.); **Regional Reps:** **Kristen Bricko** (Sherburne Co); **Jessica Holst** (Fillmore Co.); **Sue Olson** (Clay Co.); Kristy Rott (Polk Co.); **Maggie Domski** (Washington Co.); **Caseload Group Reps:** Kathy Duffy (Ramsey); **Jessica Allred** (Winona Co.); **LPHA Rep** - Marlee Morrison (Hubbard Co.); **Amber Converse** (Dodge Co.).

AG MEMBERS Not Able to Attend: **Jenny Barta** (Carlton Co.); **Arlin Penner** (Nicollet); **Katlyn Hubbard** (Becker Co.); **Megan Keller** (Scott County)

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

State Staff Updates

WIC Program New Team Members

Jenny Skinner - MOM Policy and Civil Rights Coordinator. Jenny started April 27. She is a Registered Dietitian with a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Science & Physiology. She also holds a Master of Science in Nutrition and is an IBCLC. Her experience includes working with the WIC program in Hennepin County as a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) for the past nine years. Jenny took on various additional tasks and assignments during her time in Hennepin County. She was a PCS mentor, a clinic coordinator and one of the medical formula specialists. These additional roles, her educational background and years of local WIC work experience will help her in this position.

Stephanie Olson -State WIC Consultant for the Northwest Region. Stephanie moved into this role on April 13. She is a Registered Dietitian with a Bachelor of Science in Food and Nutrition. Her experience includes working with the WIC program in Minnesota as a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) and WIC Coordinator. She has 27 years' experience working with WIC and Public Health (PH) Programs. In her role in WIC and PH, she has held leadership positions as the WIC Coordinator, Advisory Group representative, WIC LA funding, food package, pilot projects and communications workgroups. She has held other leadership positions with the Crookston Early Childhood Initiative and Crookston Community Education Advisory Board and provides Consultation to Tri-Valley Head Start and Intercounty Community Head Start. Stephanie's experiences and education and her years of work as WIC Coordinator will be very advantageous to staff in the Northwest region and the state WIC team!

Katie Walz - WIC Vendor Consultant.

Katie joined the Food Delivery Unit on April 6. Katie has over 2 years of WIC experience in Hennepin County. She also has a bachelor's degree in Dietetics from St. Kate's. Her experience includes working with the WIC program in Minnesota as a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) in Hennepin County. She additionally has served in the United States Navy as an Aviation Maintenance Administrationman for 4 years. Katie's experience with Hennepin County WIC, the Navy, her native Spanish speaking skills along with her Nutrition education are an exciting addition to SNP and the Food Delivery Unit.

Proposed changes to bylaws for NWA.

A decision was made by the NWA board and members to expand sections of the board which will bring more voices to the table. See the link below for details of the revision.

Kate discussed the need to identify additional LA representatives to be voting members for Minnesota WIC. Over the course of the next couple of years this change will take place. So, we will need an additional 3 local agency reps to serve 3-year terms. Propose to have people step forward if interested in or perhaps hold a mini election. Group liked the idea of following a pattern like we do for advisory group with regional and caseload reps. For now, meetings will be virtual.

[BYLAWS REVISIONS: SETTING THE STAGE FOR NWA'S NEXT CHAPTER](https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/bylaws-reform-one-pager-final.pdf)

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GovDelivery Format for Wednesday Update – Feedback

Any feedback? Since we were in a trial period, we wanted to collect any thoughts/concerns. Also, encourage LA staff to all sign up. For the most part, there is positive feedback on the change, looks neater and friendly, some local agencies forward to staff, & have encouraged staff sign up, some expressed concern and would like to filter information before passing along to staff. At the bottom of the Wednesday Update there is a link to subscribe.

Question was asked about who receives the Wednesday Update – right now it is the same distribution list that received Wednesday Updates in the past (mostly WIC Coordinators). We currently have 476 subscribers for the Wednesday Update. When we sent out our first Wednesday Update, there were 473 subscribers.

We have made a lot of additions but also a lot of subtractions to the subscriber list as staff changes. We've stayed pretty steady with those consuming the material and subscribing.

We encourage all staff to sign up to receive, if possible. Another comment was it is challenging to know who is receiving what messages (Wednesday Update, Thursday WINNIE/HuBERT emails, other email blasts, etc.) The email blasts that come out are only sent to the Wednesday Update distribution list – like the recent formula email. The Thursday WINNIE/HuBERT emails are sent to all staff that have a HuBERT username. We will start to put a note at the top of the emails to help identify who is receiving them so you know if you will need to pass along or not. Example: **Attn: All HuBERT Users** or **Attn: Wednesday Update email list**

Wednesday Update email list

Reimbursement Rate Discussion

It has been over two years since local agencies have seen an increase in the per participant rate. With cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and other costs increasing, is it possible to provide local agencies with more funding upfront rather than waiting for the final reimbursement in January/February after federal year closeout. The recent “additional WIC grant” funding is nice, but it would be better to concentrate on adjusting the per participant rate. The larger agencies stated it can be challenging to use the additional funds with three months left in the federal fiscal year. It is helpful to receive funds earlier in the year to help cover new staff and other costs. This is the first time we’ve been able to provide additional funding within the year rather than waiting for funds to be allocated in a final reimbursement. The WIC Management Team will look at the budget to determine if an increase is possible for the upcoming federal fiscal year.

NWA Annual Conference Highlights

Reminder that some staff might be able to attend if they apply for a scholarship. Nikki enjoyed hearing about all the parts of NWA and in particular the work of Brian Dittmeier, who is the Senior Director of Public Policy at National WIC Association & works on policies, talks to senators, and works to support us on a national level. Also, good to know what is happening with the WIC shopping experience at a national level and what different states are involved in & what is happening on the ground level. Interesting work on breastfeeding research – looking at what is most important and emphasizing that all matter from many different people (OB/GYN, peers, CPAs), Dr Jamie Stang and Rebecca presented on positive deviance – highlighted some great work and this information has been in our Wednesday Updates as well.

Trainings – Feedback

Would like to know if there are barriers in participating, time, subject matter, ideas for improving attendance either live or recorded versions, are staff informed about the various training opportunities? Are staff accessing or expressing interest in the live trainings? Are staff accessing or expressing interest in the pre-recorded trainings? Are the days/times that the trainings are offered a barrier to attending? Are there other barriers to staff attending the trainings?

Like the CEU’s and the information. The time of 8:30-9:30 or 10:00 is good. Appreciate that they are recorded. Challenging with clinic and staffing. Plus had the breastfeeding training as well so time is a challenge. Some agencies have shown the training at staff meetings so it might seem like our attendance numbers are not as high. Ramsey is not attending the WIC/FHV since they already had those trainings previously.

Few questions for Carole:

How long are trainings available to watch? The videos will be up for staff to view upon demand for some years to come. The CPEU expire at 3 years and the CERPs after 1 year from origination date (the date of the live viewing).

If LA’s watch together, do you want them to let you know. Staff can view together but should register separately, this helps us to keep track of the total registrants. Additionally, to

get the Continuing Ed credits, the staff member would have to fill out the evaluation in the MDH Learning Center separately.

Will staff know if they register more than once? In the MDH Learning Center you will only register once but may return and rewatch as often as you like. Once you are registered, the training will be located in “my courses”.

WINNIE Update (10 minutes)

On track to start UAT on Sept 19th, this must be coordinated with the entire SPIRIT User Group and all must be ready to go and start together. The MN UAT environment is up and running but some states have not had as much luck. Plan to have a Go/No go decision by mid-August to determine if everyone is ready to start UAT, until we know we will just keep Sept 19th as our plan. Discussed the name for the equivalent in WINNIE that is the same as the HuBERT Reports environment. The options were Archive or Office, the URL will match the environment name – vote was for Office. As soon as we know – go/no go we will let everyone know as the pilot and roll out are dependent on that.

CVB Increase

Issue the lower value CVB is the guidance right now since there is so much uncertainty. Gainwell and CDP are working on a process that will be used to take batches of participants that have already been issued benefits for October and automatically increase the CVB on the back side. This process will be tested in August and ready to use if the increase in the CVB is approved beginning October 1. Discussed how to communicate to participants. It was suggested that agencies say right now we are only allowed to give the higher amount through September 30th, and that could change after October 1st. Tell participants to be aware and to check benefits and app messages. We will send app messages once we have more details.

Gretchen Swanson Project Update

Update on our on-line shopping grant with Iowa and Nebraska & Hy-Vee. Earlier this spring Hy-Vee wanted to pause their participation in the project given other priorities. In July, they indicated an interest to re-engage on this project. We had explored other partners and discovered some other options. Recently met with Hy-Vee, they expressed their commitment to seeing the project through, and we will likely move forward. Need Hy-Vee to sign the contract with MDH first to demonstrate their commitment. Stay tuned, we will share more information as we can. We feel we are still positioned well.

Formula Update

Contracts for Mead Johnson & Abbott sent out today for signing. Mead Johnson reps already going out to share with healthcare providers, etc. There are rules regarding what they can say to hospitals, vendors, and clinics. California's contract is changing from Mead Johnson to Abbott on August 1, which should help with supply. We will work with Mead Johnson to assess supply in Minnesota. An email blast was shared today regarding medical formulas indicating what is currently available to order and what is not. Right now, there is a good supply of Sensitive and Advance. We have a workgroup working on the contract formula transition and communication plans. Messages to health care providers, MA medical providers, MN AAP, MN Medical Association are going out and the information is also on our website and was in the Wednesday Update last week.

QUESTION

Will we be at the State Fair this year? Yes, we are supporting Twin Cities Public Television this year. They will have 4-5 private stations for breastfeeding or pumping, this year only few state staff will be volunteering. We will have information about this in an upcoming Wednesday Update.

Health Equity – sharing

Some local agencies shared. In Washington county all hiring managers are required to take an unconscious bias training and pass a test. Maggie shares it was very valuable and makes you think. Staff are interested in helping with the Public Health Department in their diversity and inclusion efforts but waiting until fully staffed in WIC so they are freed up to participate. The department and county have lots of training. In Ramsey – they try to incorporate health equity in staff meetings, choose front line staff to coordinate it. Use a tool kit from Ramsey County. Also trying to help figure out DTR for Karen staff member to qualify to do high risk counseling. Working with St Kate's to see if can work with some staff to meet credentials. Polk, Norman, Mahnomon working on a community needs assessment. Texting link to participants if they are interested. In St Louis County in the past have taken implicit bias on-line training.

2022 October Meeting – Agenda Items

New Advisory Group Members

JULY 25, 2022, ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

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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