

# July 26, 2021, Advisory Group Meeting

## Notes

### 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.); Marlee Morrison (Hubbard Co.); Wendy O’Leary (Olmsted Co.); Stephanie Olson (Polk Co.); Arlin Penner (Nicollet Co.); Wendy Schoon (Otter Tail Co.); Amber Converse (Dodge Co.) and Kris Klopp (Mille Lacs Co.)

- **AG MEMBERS Not Able to Attend:** Amy Caron (Dodge/Steele CHB); Teresa Cooling (Watonwan); Jenny Barta – NEW rep for Northeast – Carlton County will join in October; Amber Koski (Pine Co.); Miriam Lindblad (Countryside);

### MDH STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

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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

### State Staff Updates

Megan Leonard is MDH’s new WIC Communications Coordinator and joined the meeting for a quick introduction. She started with us in June and her position will help lead, plan, and administer the communications and outreach activities for the SNP section programs including WIC, Peer Breastfeeding grant, and CSFP. A May 19<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Update includes additional details.

### Discuss future LA calls and AG meetings for 2021 & moving forward.

Gather thoughts on in person vs virtual.

A poll was provided to AG members so they could vote on their preferences for both future AG meetings and LA calls.

Since there were five AG members absent, the results are not determined yet. Results will be shared once all members have had a chance to complete the poll.

Preliminary results to date:

AG meetings - most members present want virtual meetings for October 2021 and January 2022; and in person after that.

LA calls – the majority would like monthly LA calls through 2021 and monthly for 2022.

### Update on MA outreach & texting & how to involve LA w/next steps.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, in partnership with Benefits Data Trust, worked with four states (CO, MA, MT, and VA) over the course of 2018 and 2019 to match WIC data with SNAP or Medicaid data and conducted text-based outreach to eligible families not enrolled in WIC.

Due to the success from that pilot, they offered a workshop series for a small number of states in the fall of 2020 that were also interested in launching data matching, with text-based outreach. A small group of MDH-WIC staff took part in the five workshops which ended this spring.

MN WIC quarterly receives data from Medicaid to cross match with WIC data and identify categorically eligible participants. In the past, we mailed outreach flyers to this group, with the most recent mailing in April. It is time consuming, expensive, and texting may be more effective.

Currently we are exploring using Amazon Web Services to text this group rather than send a paper mailing. We have created a few different messages and intend to send an outreach text message in August. An evaluation between messages and of the process is planned.

After consultation with our legal team, we learned we can share this MA data w/local agencies. AG members were asked if there is interest in receiving the MA data for outreach purposes. there was interest in the data, and AG members are excited to see what works and how successful it is.

It was suggested that there be a link in the text to the online application vs the website, and to see if there could be a way to link back to the main website from the online application. This will be explored.

Tami provided an update on two-way texting through the app and indicated it is currently being development. and could be a way to send two-way text messages. Testing will be in Early 2022 and rollout likely next summer/fall.

**CVB what more can we do to support/promote it? CVB is temporary, but there is a possibility for extension**

Some CVB data was shared in the LA call last week. Data is showing an increase in redemptions for F/V's. We have given tools/tips and shared w/various partners about this temporary increase. LAs are also doing activities to promote this increase and reminding participants. In response to the question raised, a concern was brought up about mapping of produce in stores where bags of fruits are more of an issue vs loose item. Jessie shares the Food Delivery Unit has gone out to larger retailers and checked varieties of fruits/vegetables for mapping. Some stores had many items not mapped and the corporate office has resolved mapping all items found. Please reach out to the Helpdesk to report issues and remember to be as specific as possible, providing UPC(s) or pictures help.

Ideas shared for promoting CVB at LAs:

- Nicollet Co. viewed data to identify participants using little or no CVB. After reaching out to participants, they found this was more common in participants with language barriers. The Coord. is offering 1:1 grocery store tours w/interpreters to help address this issue. Hennepin/Ramsey worked w/their SHIP program and MDH WIC to identify smaller stores to provide outreach. SHIP staff are promoting the CVB and have materials w/QR code on it.

**Update on guidance document for returning to in person services**

MDH WIC recommends following CDC and MDH clinic guidelines as identified in 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>) guidance document. State staff have reviewed and provided to MDH Incident Command for additional review and guidance. Watch for updates in the Wednesday Update.

### **WINNIE Update**

With the transition to WINNIE, we will need to order new servers. We are in the process of getting price estimates. State staff are currently working on writing test scripts that will be used for UAT. We will start requirements validation testing (RVT) for the last cycle of the Clinic module on 12/1/21. The first round of UAT will start 2/23 and second round on 5/4. We plan to have an updated pilot/rollout plan available in late September/early October. Some of the timeline depends on the Spirit Users Group (SUG) working through a contract extension with the enhancement contractor. Currently we are considering pilot beginning in August 2022 and finishing statewide rollout by February 2023. Reminder that WINNIE the Scoop is created monthly and sent via the Wednesday Update. This includes updates on schedule as well as first looks at the screens and functionality.

### **Health Equity**

At our last meeting health equity was discussed as a topic that is a “work in progress” and members agreed that it should be a standing AG agenda item for discussion at each meeting.

During the discussion in April, 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

Nikki led the discussion at AG and asked, what does it mean to have this as a standing meeting agenda item?

Do we want to focus on a particular area?

- What will make it meaningful/useful?
- Should try for a quarter or for a year to discuss?
- Do LAs want to get closer to communities & partners for feedback?
- Would it be helpful to share some ideas for trainings, resources, etc. that would help WIC staff on this topic. LA could share?
- Maybe you want ideas from the state level?

**Sharing:**

Some workgroups are formed at the county level; however, WIC staff can't always participate.

**Resources mentioned that would be helpful:**

- Make available trainings/ideas for resources.
- Books to share with staff.
- TED talks for staff meetings or down time.
- Does MDH has a diversity and inclusion training?

**AG members commented they have done the following activities:**

- Cultural humility training.
- Bridges out of Poverty.
- Have felt remote services contributes to health equity.

**Ideas to help promote health equity**

- Evaluate systems and how equitable they are.
- Is there a way to list preferred pronouns in WINNIE?
- Need for more African American employees. There is a gap in recruiting, hiring, training. Would be nice if it could be part of locally trained CPA. Webinars advertised in the NWA Monday Updates and on the HUB.

**Next steps:**

- Invite MDH Center for Health Equity to a future meeting for additional insight.
- AG members can bring various tools and resources to share.

We will keep this agenda item to keep it a priority.

**Ideas/thoughts on how to promote on-line application**

We notified the following partners – DHS, health care providers, Head Start, CTC, FHV, and encouraged LA's to share w/their communities. When we do the MA text outreach it will point to our online application. The application is on the WIC website home page and families' page. We also asked to have it added to Help me Connect and Bridges to Benefits web sites.

**LA sharing on how it has been promoted.**

Developed posters for clinics/MD offices w/ QR code; online app link included on Facebook post; QR code on handouts for National Night Out and county fair handout. Kiosks in county buildings, food shelves and cultural centers that have a WIC button that includes the online application.

It was asked if we could share a QR code, it will go out in a WU memo 7/28.

**Survey Results**

Survey was given in March, April. Part of a multistate effort to help form policy and procedures. It was in English/Spanish/Somali. The English & Spanish quantitative part is analyzed. Still working on the qualitative.

Goal is to have this information shared at the regional meetings next month.

**Talking points:** most participants are satisfied w/WIC services; many would prefer remote services to in person; food insecurity is endemic in WIC and is 3-4 times the rate for MN (8.3%) as a whole; during the pandemic participants reported decreases in income, mental and physical health.

**How are Regions presenting Everyday Hero Award?**

*There was a question from an AG member on how Regions are presenting the Everyday Hero Award.*

**First week of August**

- **WIC AG Reps** notify LA WIC Coordinators & MDH WIC of Everyday Hero from their Region (I have already sent out the Metro and Southeast Region)
- **WIC Coordinators** share election results w/nominees from their agency

**By end of 3<sup>rd</sup> week of August**

- Award Certificates – mailed by MDH WIC

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> week August**

- Plan time/venue to honor award recipients from Region (WIC AG Reps, WIC Coordinator for award recipients, State WIC Regional Consultant)

**September 1<sup>st</sup>** – Wednesday Updates announces all EHs

**September 30 @ Conference** – EH announced as well

**Sharing of ideas**

Invite candidate to attend their regional meeting and say a few words on why they were chosen & a little summary by the WIC Coordinator & Regional Consultant.

Might be different though now that it is virtual.

LAs can also select how they want to honor the awardee whether it be staff meetings, internal newsletter, etc.

Reminder that it is always good to mention all that were nominated as well since it is an honor.

Some have a photo opportunity as well.

**Agenda Items for October Meeting**

**Health Equity** – standing agenda item

**Feedback on the Everyday Hero process.**

**Feedback on the September 30<sup>th</sup> Virtual Conference**

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