

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and Summary Notes

Agenda Items:

- National Updates - Kate
- ARPA Waivers Guidance – Rebecca
- Infant Formula Updates – Jessie
- Timeline for App Messages – Megan
- HuBERT Scheduler and Poll – Tami
- Multistate Participant Survey - Joni

National Updates- Kate

Key Legislation to Modernize WIC Reintroduced End of March

Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Roger Marshall, joined by Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick and Suzanne Bonamici, led the reintroduction of the MODERN WIC Act. This legislation would provide permanent remote certification options while facilitating new data-sharing opportunities with health care providers and providing additional flexibilities to ensure timely collection of anthropometric data. Senators Gillibrand and Marshall also reintroduced the WIC Healthy Beginnings Act, which would create a centralized resource at USDA for information about WIC infant formula contracts to urge increased competition and clarity during the bidding process.

Federal Spending Discussions in Congress

This week there have been discussions in Congress about the federal debt ceiling and federal spending. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently stated that cuts in social program funding would require WIC to reinstitute waiting lists for the first time since the 1990s, resulting in nearly 250,000 WIC participants losing access to program benefits. Secretary Vilsack also emphasized the importance of WIC's enhanced Cash Value Benefit for fruits and vegetables and reiterated USDA's commitment to proposed science-based updates to the WIC food package.

NWA and Nava Released [2023 WIC Technology Landscape Report](#)

This report details innovations and lessons learned from remote pandemic operations that provide a more nuanced understanding of challenges and informs targeted recommendations. It details persistent structural barriers to technology equity and progress made to dismantle those barriers. It also calls for additional policy and systems support to increase the capacity of WIC technology-enabled service delivery across the country.

Other Program Updates

ARPA Waivers Guidance – Rebecca

Draft guidance has been developed by a state workgroup and shared with some agencies for review and feedback. Agencies have shared their comments and the state workgroup will consider how to incorporate that feedback and clarify some areas. We continue to wait for USDA to provide additional information on questions we have presented about the guidance. They indicate they will respond in early May and have a Q & A for states. We anticipate we will have this guidance to Local Agencies shortly after we get the information from USDA.

Infant Formula Updates – Jessie

- Mead Johnson has extended the Enfamil larger can sizes through May 30, 2023. The Gentlease neuropro larger sizes remain an option through May.
- As scheduled, all non-Enfamil milk-based substitutes will be removed from HuBERT and the APL on April 29, 2023.
- The soy contract, Similac Soy Isomil will only be available in the 12.4 oz size and the larger substitute will be removed April 29, 2023
- The medical substitutes for hypoallergenic store brands, hydrolyzed and preemie products are still allowed under Federal waiver through June 29, 2023. April 29, 2023 we are making an adjustment to the maximum monthly allowance MN WIC will give.
 - 27.8 oz medical formulas will now remove 3 cans of formula from the card for every 1 can purchased. Previously we removed 2 cans.
 - 19.8 oz, 22.80 oz and 23 oz medical formulas will now remove 2 cans of formula

Updates to all the posted substitution lists will be made May 1, 2023, to reflect these changes. The Soy substitution list will no longer be posted.

Timeline for App Messages – Megan

We have several topics to communicate to participants through the My MN WIC App over the coming months. Here is the timeline of messages. These may adjust as needed.

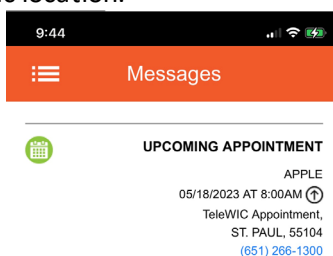
- **April 25:** Formula substitutions ending message 1 of 3
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages week of April 25. Health care provider message April 26.*
- **May 9:** NWA survey message 1 of 3
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages pointing to the app notification for the link.*
- **May 16:** Dairy food benefit changes
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages mid-May and late May.*
- **May 23:** Formula larger can substitutions ending message 2 of 3
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages May 23 and end of May.*
- **June 6:** NWA survey message 2 of 3
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages pointing to the app notification for the link.*
- **June 13:** Canned fruits and veggies on benefits

- *Social posts with supporting nutrition and informational messages on Facebook and Instagram in June.*
- **June 20:** NWA survey message 3 of 3
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages pointing to the app notification for the link.*
- **June 27:** Formula (medical formula large can or store brand substitutions ending) message 3 of 3.
 - *Social posts on Facebook and Instagram pages.*

Watch for upcoming notifications content in future Weekly Updates.

HuBERT Scheduler and Poll – Tami

We have started to receive requests for new virtual clinics in preparation for the new ARPA waivers starting in August 2023. Prior to the pandemic, the option to add a virtual clinic called Nutrition Ed Phone Call was offered to each agency. This clinic was to be used for scheduling phone visit appointments when offering Education Choice contacts. At that time a few agencies started using it this option. The advantage that agencies found was that within the My MN WIC Mobile App messages section, where a participant can see a list of their appointments, instead of the clinic address it displayed Nutrition Ed Phone call so that participants knew it was a phone call contact instead of an appointment at a Clinic location.



We will continue to use one standardized name for the virtual clinic. To determine what this virtual clinic would be called, an email was sent to the Local Agencies that are currently using the Nutrition Ed Phone Call Clinic with options to pick from to rename the clinic. The top 2 responses were TeleWIC Visit and TeleWIC Appointment. On the Local Agency Update call April 19th, a poll was taken of the agencies to determine which to use. Although very close TeleWIC Appointment had the highest votes in the poll.

On Friday 4/28/23 all current Nutrition Ed Phone call clinics will have the name updated to TeleWIC Appointment.

For those Local Agencies that want to add the TeleWIC Appointment Clinic please complete the [Change Grantees, Agencies or Clinics in IS and/or on MDH Website](#). Under the Reason/Justification section note that you want access added for your staff.

Multistate Participant Survey – Joni

The NWA participant survey will be administered in English, Spanish and Somali during May and June, 2023 through the “My Minnesota WIC” app. This survey will include questions on:

- Participation and Enrollment
- Appointments and Nutrition Education
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Shopping

- WIC Card and App
- Cash Value Benefits
- Perception of proposed WIC food package changes
- Socio-demographics and food security

This year, survey participants can elect to participate in a drawing to receive one of fifty \$20 virtual gift cards. Survey participants will also be asked if they want to participate in a qualitative follow up interview for which they will receive a \$20 gift card. Results from the qualitative survey will be available in Fall of 2024.

Questions & Answers

Will the poll result replace what we currently have if we already have a virtual clinic?

Yes, the Nutrition Ed Phone Call Clinic will be replaced with the result of the survey.

Can you provide information regarding the Nut Ed Phone Call clinic?

See above.

Is there a planned start date for this newly named clinic option?

See above.

We do not use the phone call clinic either. How does this benefit Local Agencies?

From St. Paul/Ramsey County - One benefit is that it allows Local Agencies to schedule phone appointments for all of our clinics on one schedule and gives some flexibility.

See additional info above.

Are they intentionally surveying before the end of the PH waivers? Or was that not a consideration?

Yes, they are purposefully sending the survey before the end of the waivers so that we can get information about client satisfaction during that unique time period.

Could we temporarily add the survey link to our website as another way for participants to access it if they lose it?

Yes, adding the survey link to your website is a good idea.

Will NWA survey findings be shared with local agencies. Will info. be broken down by agency or just state?

Information will be shared with local agencies sometime this fall depending on when we get the data file from NWA. We will be able to look at these data by zip code.

At this time, are you anticipating a per participant rate change for FFY24?

No.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[2023 WIC Technology Landscape Report \(https://thewichub.org/2023-wic-technology-landscape-report/\)](https://thewichub.org/2023-wic-technology-landscape-report/)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 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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