

**Spotlight: Improved Services for Clients with Qualifying Conditions**

The new food package for clients with qualifying conditions provides a unique opportunity to coordinate better services for clients. Not only does it improve communication between the health care provider and WIC staff, it also ensures the best possible food package for clients, considering their medical conditions.

**Why Qualifying Conditions?**

When client's specific qualifying conditions are identified with medical documentation, it ensures the appropriate food package is issued. Clients with conditions which do not qualify can be better served by a maximum food package or a customized food package and receive the best nutritional value for their medical condition.

**What are the Qualify Conditions and Non-Qualifying Conditions?**

Below is a table which lists qualifying conditions and non-qualifying conditions for infants, children and women.

<b>Client Category</b>	<b>Qualifying Conditions (include but are not limited to)</b>	<b>Non-Qualifying Conditions</b>
Infants	Premature birth Low birth weight Failure to thrive Inborn errors of metabolism and metabolic disorders Gastrointestinal disorders Malabsorption syndromes Immune system disorders Severe food allergies requiring an elemental formula Life threatening disorders, disease and medical conditions that impair ingestion, digestion, absorption, or the utilization of nutrients that could adversely affect the client's nutritional status	Non-specific formula or food intolerance Diagnosed formula intolerance or food allergy to lactose, sucrose, milk protein or soy protein that does not require use of an exempt infant formula Solely for the purpose of enhancing nutrient intake or managing body weight without an underlying qualifying condition

<b>Client Category</b>	<b>Qualifying Conditions (include but are not limited to)</b>	<b>Non-Qualifying Conditions</b>
Children (1-4 years)	<p>Premature birth</p> <p>Low birth weight</p> <p>Failure to thrive</p> <p>Inborn errors of metabolism and metabolic disorders</p> <p>Gastrointestinal disorders</p> <p>Malabsorption syndromes</p> <p>Immune system disorders</p> <p>Severe food allergies requiring an elemental formula</p> <p>Life threatening disorders, disease and medical conditions that impair ingestion, digestion, absorption, or the utilization of nutrients that could adversely affect the client's nutritional status</p>	<p>Food intolerance to lactose or milk protein that can be successfully managed with the use of one of the other WIC food packages</p> <p>Solely for the purpose of enhancing nutrient intake or managing body weight without an underlying qualifying condition</p>
Women	<p>Inborn errors of metabolism and metabolic disorders</p> <p>Gastrointestinal disorders</p> <p>Malabsorption syndromes</p> <p>Immune system disorders</p> <p>Severe food allergies requiring an elemental formula</p> <p>Life threatening disorders, disease and medical conditions that impair ingestion, digestion, absorption, or the utilization of nutrients that could adversely affect the client's nutritional status</p>	<p>Food intolerance to lactose or milk protein that can be successfully managed with the use of one of the other WIC food packages</p> <p>Solely for the purpose of enhancing nutrient intake or managing body weight without an underlying qualifying condition</p>

## **What Do I Need For Health Care Providers?**

Beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, new medical documentation forms will be used for clients with qualifying conditions who require a WIC formula. These forms are:

- DCH-1325 Instructions for Michigan WIC Medical Documentation
- DCH-1326 Medical Documentation for WIC Formula and Authorized WIC Food-  
*Infants and Children (through 4 years of age)*
- DCH-1327 Medical Documentation for WIC Formula and Authorized WIC  
Foods-*Pregnant, Breastfeeding and Non-lactating Postpartum Women*

A physician's prescription form will no longer be accepted for issuance of WIC formula (except Class I contract formulas for infants). Staff will need to have these forms readily available for clients to give to their health care providers.

You can also direct health care providers to these forms on the Michigan WIC website at <http://www.michigan.gov/wic> (Go to "New WIC Foods" under Medical Providers).

If you have an inquiry from a health care provider regarding the new federal requirements, you can indicate that these are new WIC requirements to ensure quality coordination of client services. The following is a listing of the federal requirements for medical documentation:

1. WIC formula (infant formula, exempt infant formula, and/or WIC-eligible medical foods), including amount needed per day.
2. Authorized supplemental food(s) appropriate for the qualifying condition(s) and their prescribed amounts.
3. Length of time the prescribed WIC formula and/or supplemental food is required by the client.
4. Qualifying condition(s) for issuance of the authorized supplemental food(s) requiring medical documentation.
5. Signature, date and contact information of the health care provider.

## **Medical Documentation Forms Facilitate Coordination of Services**

Because clients can receive up to the maximum allowance of supplemental foods with a WIC formula, staff need all of the necessary information provided on the medical documentation form by health care providers.

The new medical documentation forms require additional information, so WIC staff may need to schedule extra time to communicate with health care providers and clients. Health care providers may need to clarify the qualifying condition and supplemental foods (if any) authorized for clients.

## **Anticipated Client Questions, Rationale for Staff, and How to Respond**

Because medical documentation requirements have changed so much, clients may have questions. Below are some questions you may receive, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) rationale for staff understanding, and possible responses for clients.

### **Question: Why do I need a Qualifying Condition for more than 1 lb of cheese?**

*IOM Rationale for Staff:* Reducing the maximum amount of cheese reduces the amount of saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol. Reduction in the current levels of cheese ensures that WIC is able to provide a more balanced nutrient intake for WIC clients. Amounts of cheese that exceed the maximum substitution amounts may be authorized with medical documentation in cases of lactose intolerance or other qualifying conditions.

*Possible Response for Client:* You sound concerned about receiving less cheese now. Cheese adds extra saturated fat to your diet and is not as healthy. WIC now provides healthier food choices instead, such as fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain breads and tortillas.

### **Question: Why can't a doctor's prescription form be used for a WIC formula?**

*IOM Rationale for Staff:* The medical documentation requirements were made to ensure the client's healthcare provider has determined that the supplemental foods are not medically contraindicated by the client's qualifying condition.

*Possible Response for Clients:* You sound concerned about changing to the medical documentation form. The form ensures that you receive all of the food and formula benefits determined by your doctor.

### **Question: Why do women and children 2-4 years old need to have a WIC formula prescribed in order to also receive a whole milk substitution?**

*IOM Rationale:* Whole milk may be authorized for children 2 through 4 years and women who receive a WIC formula for a qualifying condition with medical documentation. Clients who have medical conditions that lead to a diagnosis of failure to thrive, underweight or overweight who could benefit from whole milk would likely be issued a WIC formula as well.

*Possible Response for Clients:* You sound concerned about getting substitutions for reduced fat or fat free milk. Whole milk and cheese add a lot of extra calories and saturated fat to your diet compared to reduced fat or fat free milk. Animal fat is not as healthy, either. We can help you with ways to switch to lower fat milk.

## **Internet Resources**

Michigan WIC <http://www.michigan.gov/wic>

This website provides information, list of available formulas, and forms for WIC staff, clients and health care providers.

WIC Works Database <http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks>

This website provides helpful information on the identification and indications for use of infant formulas, exempt infant formulas and WIC-eligible medical foods.