



WIC NEWS

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Special Supplemental Nutrition Program
for Women, Infants, and Children

March 2021

Note from the Director

Keep Calm and Carry On!

As you all know, we continue to face unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of you have lost loved ones, experienced financial hardships, or weathered great emotional and physical stress during this time of uncertainty.

I would like to encourage all of you to **“Keep Calm and Carry On,”** as this too shall pass!

Please continue to follow the CDC guidelines of mask wearing, social distancing, and frequently washing or sanitizing your hands to decrease the spread of the virus. Always remember, what we choose to do each day in WIC influences everyone with whom we interact, and our actions contribute to the health of our communities.

I am very appreciative of the hard work that each of you does to provide great customer service and support, ensuring the health and well-being of those we serve in Michigan. In times of adversity, it's great to know that our clients can depend on WIC.

Thank you again for your support and commitment to serve!

Christina Herring-Johnson
WIC Division Director



March is National Nutrition Month



National Nutrition Month[®] is an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. During the month of March, everyone is invited to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits.

This year's theme is *Personalize Your Plate!* The campaign's key messaging will focus on eating a variety of nutritious foods every day, meal planning and cooking tips, and the benefits of working with a Registered Dietitian!

[Click here to access the National Nutrition Month[®] Campaign Toolkit!](#)

The Academy also offers a social media toolkit with sample messages, graphics, and more! For this and a number of additional National Nutrition Month[®] resources, click [here!](#)

A Note from Tara

Your State Agency Nutrition Education Lead

Happy National Nutrition Month! We are hoping you have all come up with some ways to celebrate at your local agencies, even if it will be done remotely.

This year's theme, *Personalize Your Plate*, highlights the importance of tailoring healthy eating to each individual. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition and health. We are all unique with different bodies, goals, backgrounds, and tastes! This sounds a lot to me like how Michigan WIC approaches our nutrition service delivery, using the key concepts of client centered service. So many of our trainings focus on meeting clients where they are and working together with them on positive behavior changes or goals designed with clients' unique situations in mind. Maybe a client's goal is to *personalize their plate* with more fruits and vegetables, or maybe to walk around the block with their kids each night. Whatever the case, every day you encourage your clients to meet their *personal* goals, not one-size-fits-all goals.



Be sure to check out this month's article highlighting the new Food Guide, effective March 1. It now offers more variety and options to help your clients *Personalize Their Plates*.

If you are looking for additional client centered counseling tips, tricks, or tools, check out our resource library on the [Michigan WIC Client Centered Services webpage](#). Thank you for your efforts in living this year's theme every single day!

New Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 and MyPlate Digital Tools and Resources

USDA and HHS recently released the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](#), the nation's leading nutrition advice to help Americans lead healthier lives. With the new *Dietary Guidelines* comes an updated [MyPlate](#), hosting many new digital tools and resources to help families put these recommendations into action and *make every bite count!* Some tools and resources you and your WIC clients might find interesting include:

- Healthy, budget-friendly recipes on [MyPlate Kitchen](#). This resource provides detailed nutrition and food group information to help choose recipes to fit a family's needs.
- [Healthy Eating on a Budget](#) provides tips on saving money at the store by making a shopping plan, shopping smart, and preparing healthy meals to stretch food dollars.
- The [Start Simple with MyPlate](#) app emphasizes that small changes matter, and supports users as they pick goals, see real-time progress, and earn badges to celebrate successes.

Find these and many other tools and resources to share with your clients at <http://www.myplate.gov>!



dr.yumproject eat well. change your world.

The Dr. Yum Project is a pediatrician-founded and pediatrician-led nonprofit on a mission to help families overcome barriers to eating well. Many families worry that healthy foods won't taste good, will be difficult to make, and will be expensive. Dr. Yum is here to show busy parents that isn't the case!

Start with Dr. Yum's WIC Food Package search tag to find recipes with at least 75% of the ingredients found on the list. Then check out Dr. Yum's Meal-o-Matic, a free e-tool that allows you to make a custom recipe out of what you have in the fridge or pantry. It's like a choose-your-own-adventure recipe!

Visit DoctorYum.org for even more free resources.

January Was National Birth Defects Prevention Month!

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Birth Defects Education and Outreach Program joined the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) to raise awareness of birth defects and to promote strategies that improve the health of mothers and babies.

This year's theme was "**Best for You. Best for Baby.**" Although not all birth defects can be prevented, the healthcare community can help all women who may become pregnant or are pregnant to lower their risk of having babies with birth defects. This includes encouraging them to follow some basic health guidelines throughout their reproductive years:

- Be sure to take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
- Book a visit with your healthcare provider before stopping or starting any medicine.
- Become up to date with all vaccines, including the flu shot.
- Before you get pregnant, try to reach a healthy weight.
- Boost your health by avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs.

The new year is the perfect time to highlight the importance of folic acid in preventing certain birth defects. The United States Public Health Service recommends that all women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (400mcg or .4mg) of folic acid daily. This single step may prevent up to 50 - 70% of neural tube defects, such as spina bifida and anencephaly.

You can make a difference in the lives of Michigan families! Find and share additional resources from the MDHHS Birth Defects Education and Outreach Program and Michigan Genetics Resource Center websites. If you have questions or would like more information, follow MDHHS on Facebook or Twitter for up-to-date information and tips on health, programs, and services.



NUTRITION 101

Updated Michigan WIC Food Guide includes Expanded Food Options

By: Hannah Ryba, Be Well Solution's Dietetic Intern, and Tara Fischer, State WIC Consultant

During the recent pandemic, Michigan WIC expanded food choices to bring more variety to WIC clients. Those changes and more have been incorporated into the new Food Guide, which will take effect on March 1. The goal with these new foods was to provide added flexibility when grocery shopping and to ensure our clients had access to nutritious foods (remember those bare grocery shelves early in the pandemic?). Along with adding more food items, like canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, WIC also included more brand varieties to ensure accessibility. Let's review some of these changes and some nutrition highlights of each.

Canned and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables:

The nutrient content in frozen and canned fruits and vegetables is comparable to fresh fruit and vegetables! Any nutrients lost through the canning and freezing processes are minimal with no noticeable impact. In fact, depending on the item, canning and freezing can preserve the nutrient values and increase their absorption and utilization when digested. Fruit and vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, such as potassium, fiber, folate (folic acid), and vitamins A and C. With increased options, clients are more easily able to meet their daily fruit and vegetable intake and obtain key nutrients for an overall healthy diet. With these expanded food options, clients can purchase any brand, package size, or type of frozen fruits and vegetables, except for those with added sugars, fats, oils, or salt.

Whole Grains

Expanded whole grain options are also available, including more brands and types of cereal, oatmeal, and tortillas. Whole grains are fiber-rich and are packed with B-vitamins, iron, copper, magnesium, antioxidants, and zinc! Consuming whole grain foods also lowers the risk of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, and is good for digestive health.

Dairy

Michigan WIC also added additional brands to our yogurt selection, such as Prairie Farms and Activia. Even tubed yogurt can now be purchased with the WIC card! Dairy products are important when it comes to bone health and help contribute to maintaining a healthy weight. Dairy products are high in calcium, vitamin D, zinc, and are good sources of protein. To address accessibility and variety, instead of only being able to buy 16 oz. of a single cheese, the expanded food options now allow clients to choose up to two different 8 oz. cheeses.

Looking to the future

We are excited to continue offering most expanded food options to clients beyond the current pandemic. This keeps us moving in the right direction since clients now have more food choices and variety to better meet their nutrition needs. For more information regarding the new Food Guide, see the other Food Guide-related article in this newsletter, or visit our [website](#).

STAFF APPRECIATION

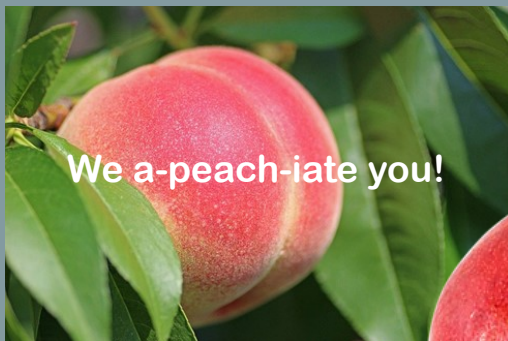


2021 FOOD GUIDE EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2021

The Michigan WIC Program is happy to announce that, effective March 1, 2021, we will be launching a new Food Guide. The Food Guide has been expanded upon with additional health messages, more choices within food categories, and some refined or revised authorization criteria. WIC was able to incorporate many of these expanded choices at the beginning of the pandemic, and many have since been carried over to the new Food Guide. Beginning March 1, the new Food Guide will be available in English, Spanish and Arabic on the WIC Connect mobile app and at michigan.gov/wicfoods.

Highlights include:

- Canned and frozen fruits & vegetables
- Additional choices of national brand & store brand cold cereals
- Revised egg criteria
- Expanded breastfeeding messaging
- Expanded options in fish category – adding mackerel & sardines to light tuna & pink salmon, in can or foil pouch, any size up to 30 ounces
- Allowance of organic infant cereals, infant fruits & vegetables and infant meats
- Allowance of kid-friendly yogurt in 2-ounce tubes





COMMUNITY MATCH/COACHING

Coffective has officially launched the Community Match platform! Community Match is a tool that will improve upon coordination efforts with local maternal and child health partners. Examples of those partners include your fellow WIC local agencies, birthing hospitals, community groups, prenatal clinics, home visiting programs and coalitions.

Community Match will help you:

- Expand your local network,
- Efficiently communicate changes to services and practices,
- Share your own and learn from the successes of others,
- And much more!

Encourage your partner organizations to join Community Match by sharing this registration [link](#)!

To further enhance your partnerships, Coffective offers one-on-one coaching over the phone. Your Coffective coach will help you identify potential partners, build or improve upon your relationships with those partners, and determine the most effective methods to familiarize your partners with all that WIC has to offer. Each of these areas of focus can help you reach and serve a greater number of families in your community.

Click [here](#) to get started with your coaching calls!

Please email JacksonW6@michigan.gov with any questions on Community Match or Coffective coaching calls.

HIGHLIGHT ON CLIENT CENTERED SERVICES

Monica Smith, MA, LPC, RD

Happy National Nutrition Month! I really like this year's theme, *Personalize Your Plate*. I like it because it implies that the client, the eater, has the power and the ability to choose well. That is such a client centered way to approach food and eating. But let us look at this from a professional and CCS point of view. What if this month was a month to Personalize Your Practice?

We can look at CCS and motivational interviewing as a skill set because it is. The skill will serve you and your clients well. Yet when you personalize your practice, you begin to find your own client centered, other centered voice. Reflections come naturally and they are meaningful; open-ended questions come from curiosity and build rapport. Change talk just seems to flow.

Personalizing the way you practice your interactions with clients puts MI-WIC in its place as a tool instead of a task master. It also lets you connect to clients authentically while helping them to personalize their plates in healthier ways. You cannot mess up when you use your own voice and stay client centered. The client will do the rest.



DOES WIC MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Submitted by: Libby Hrabonz

We know it does, and now there is even more science to prove it! According to a recent article published in the December 2020 edition of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* entitled “Selected Food Group Intake of US Children Aged 2 to 4 by WIC Participation Status and Income” (see citation below), WIC participation DOES make a difference. The author’s research showed WIC participation closed the gap between higher income children and WIC participants for some foods targeted by the WIC food package.

This study reviewed children aged 2-4-years old; this age group is frequently understudied. Interesting note: a quarter of US children 2-4 years old participate in the WIC program. The researchers felt it was important to study the dietary intake of these older children to see if and how the food package supports their dietary behaviors.

This was a cross-sectional study using data from the 2011-2014 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) on 1,047 children, ages 2-4 years. The participants in the study were from three groups:

1. Higher income children (income >185% of poverty level),
2. WIC eligible non-participants, and
3. WIC children.

Highlights of the study showed that children on WIC consumed a significantly higher percentage of red and orange vegetables and legumes than WIC-eligible non-participants. No differences in mean intake were observed between WIC children and higher income children. The study also found that WIC children consumed significantly more whole grains than both higher income children and the WIC-eligible non-participants. There were no differences observed in the mean intake of WIC children and other study participants in other priority food groups and subgroups, including dairy and protein.

This supports the conclusion that participating in the WIC program helps close the gap in the intake of some priority food groups and subgroups targeted by the WIC food package. We hope these study results encourage and reassure you that the work you do is important and makes a difference!

Article Citation: Zimmer MC, Vernarelli JA. Select Food Group Intake of US Children Aged 2 to 4 Years by WIC Participation Status and Income. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2020 Dec;120(12):2032-2038.e1. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2020.07.027. PMID: 33222884.

POSITIVE CLIENT FEEDBACK

“I want to express how undeniably grateful I am for this program. I'm the only one bringing home money and this feeds my family. This is a blessing to know I can get food for me and my baby when I'm working and hoping to afford my bills. Thank you to everyone involved to make this program work!”

- Grand Rapids Mom



In September 2019, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced the release of the Mother Infant Health & Equity Improvement Plan (MIHEIP).

The MIHEIP integrates interventions across the maternal-infant dyad, promoting a holistic approach to care that encompasses health and well-being for both mom and baby, building off years of successful work across Michigan. The Plan also aims to address the gaps that have persistently left behind the most vulnerable groups of women and infants across our state.

During the last year, many successes have improved the lives of mothers, infants and families in Michigan. Maternal infant health stakeholders continued to work on expansive and diverse efforts statewide. The MIHEIP Year One Highlights document is intended to emphasize successes and acknowledge the invaluable commitment of stakeholders and may be accessed [here](#).

While improvements have been realized, persistent challenges remain; mothers and babies are still dying from preventable causes.

Disparities that show up in every facet of maternal and infant health are rooted in long standing systemic inequities, often based on race. Women of color are more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women, and infants born to women of color are more likely to die before they reach their first birthdays.

(Source: MDHHS, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2010-2018)

All Michigan mothers, infants and families have the right to optimal health, adequate access to appropriate and timely care, and the opportunity to thrive. Together we can achieve the vision of zero preventable deaths and zero health disparities.

*Zero preventable deaths
Zero health disparities*



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) UPDATE

Michigan WIC is excited to announce the launch of our DEI Action Plan. This initiative will be led by Myra Lee, Social Determinants of Health Policy Analyst for the WIC Division at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. “We have a powerful opportunity to shift our culture at WIC and create systems change in Michigan, starting with recognizing the history of oppression that has resulted in ongoing disparities that directly impact our WIC mothers and families,” says Ms. Lee.

To kick-off the strategic planning process, a DEI Committee was established in January with representation from WIC staff from all sections and core areas within the WIC Division. We are thrilled to recognize the following WIC staff who were nominated by the Management Team and WIC Director Christina Herring-Johnson to serve in this role and capacity, to successfully move this initiative forward.

DEI COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Karen Batterham
William Crenshaw

Amy Dotson
Katherine Groble

Whitney Jackson
Eric Johnson

Dionne Moore-Smith
Kaitlin Skwir

This dedicated team will work diligently in fiscal year '21 in collaboration with the leadership team to focus on implementing the following key objectives:

1. Create an inclusive, equitable culture at WIC within the workplace and communities we serve in Michigan.
2. Identify DEI and racial equity goals to advance health equity.
3. Develop a strategic plan that clearly demonstrates the WIC Division’s continued commitment to eliminate systemic racism and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Please look for future updates to be regularly included in the WIC News.

“TEC” CORNER

It has been a year since Michigan’s first presumptive positive COVID-19 test was announced. Working from home and coming up with creative ways to continue to provide services to our clients has been challenging for all of us. One challenge has been providing and participating in WIC trainings. In May 2020, the State WIC Training, Evaluation and Compliance (TEC) Unit began rolling out the first of several virtual trainings and has since provided Anthropometric, Laboratory, Advanced CPA, CPA, Breastfeeding, and Peer trainings to over 1,000 participants. The response to these trainings has been very positive; some feedback included statements like “we can send more staff this way” and “travel not involved.” In October we held a virtual Coordinator Summit and received similar feedback.

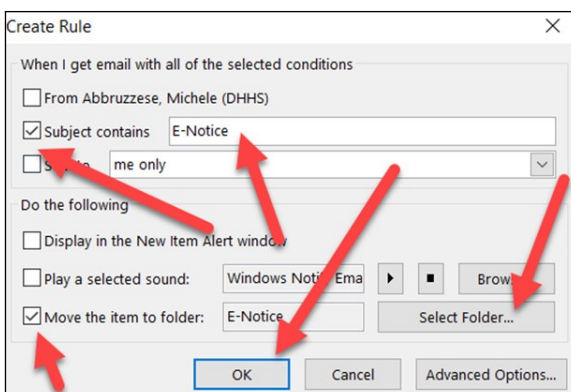
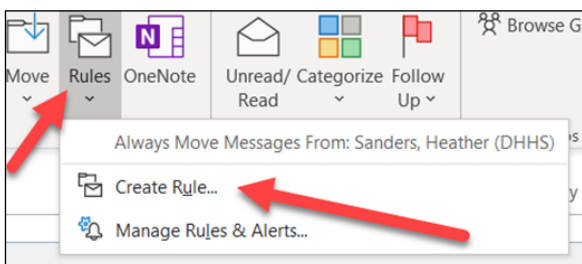
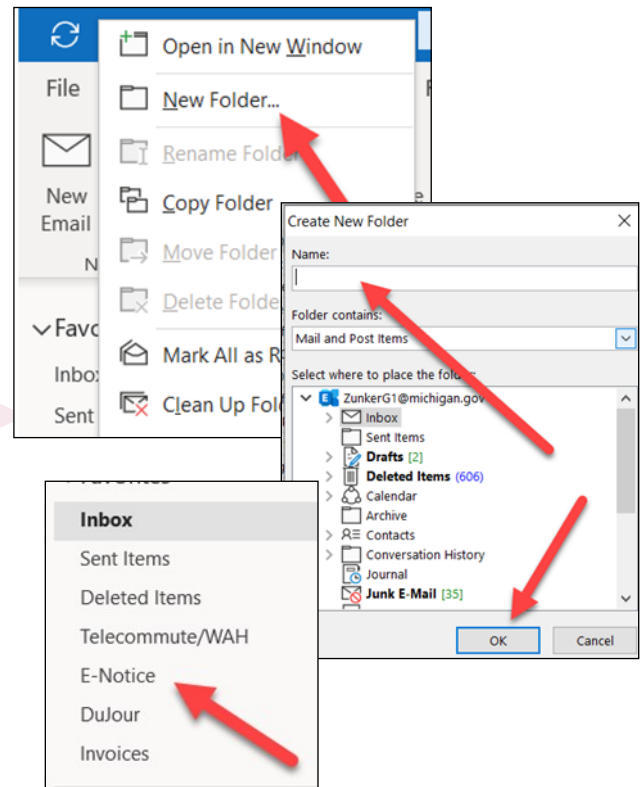
The challenges we faced with shortening the trainings and being able to provide pertinent information were outweighed by the benefits. WIC staff have gained knowledge in how to provide and participate in successful trainings using Zoom and Microsoft Teams. While we still may come across a few glitches here and there, we appreciate everyone’s patience as we master the remote work environment.

With all of the uncertainty over the past year, local agency staff, State staff and partners have shown great leadership and commitment to the WIC Program. Kudos to you all!

Using Folders and Rules to Organize Outlook E-Notices

First, create an E-Notice folder in your Outlook inbox:

- Right click on “Inbox”
- Left click on “New Folder”
- A pop-up window will appear
- Enter a name such as “E-notices” and click ok (the folder should appear in your inbox list)



Next, create a rule for Outlook to enter E-notices into the “E-Notice” folder:

On your Outlook Home toolbar,

- Left click “Rules”
- Left click “Create Rule”
- Create the rule by specifying your own conditions, actions, and exceptions
- Put a check mark in the “Subject contains” box by clicking on it
- Enter the word “E-Notice”
- Click on “Move the item to folder”
- Select “E-Notice” folder
- Click “OK”

Note: When a new E-notice is received, a number will appear in bold next to the folder name to indicate there are new unread emails in that folder.



LOCAL AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS



Washtenaw County – Building Bridges to Promotion (BB2P)

As Washtenaw County WIC ramped up its outreach efforts to increase its caseload, enrollment and participation, we launched “Building Bridges to Promotion (BB2P)”- a joint venture between Washtenaw County DHHS and Washtenaw County WIC. The goal of this project is to connect both agencies to promote community health of all children who deserve to be safe from harm, raised in loving, committed families, and provided supports that build their well-being.

The BB2P presentation was administered by the WIC Program Service Coordinator, Gayathri Akella, who was accompanied by the MDHHS WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, Marji Cyrul, and two dietetic student interns. There were 50 caseworkers from MDHHS child welfare programs (foster care, adoption, and protective services) present. The presentation was designed to educate the group about the services that WIC provides, as well as who is eligible for the program and how best to refer clients who would benefit from WIC services. The substantial impact that WIC makes in the lives of families in Michigan was highlighted, and the potential for partnering all relevant programs and services was reiterated. The caseworkers present provided positive feedback throughout the presentation and were energized by the notion of collaborating to reach the maximum number of children and families in the community. Moving forward, MDHHS associates will have an avenue to educate and provide referrals to clients who could utilize the WIC program to their benefit.

Caseworkers were thrilled to receive some of the Health Department swag: Chapstick, pens and Band-Aid holders loaded with Band-Aids.

Next steps:

1. This presentation will be repeated to various DHHS programs: childcare assistance, Medicaid, SER utility assistance and SNAP food benefits.
2. WIC will offer a meeting room and tour of the WIC office to DHHS program staff.

Detroit Health Department – Superhero Capes

WIC “graduates” in Detroit are celebrated by being given a superhero cape that reads “I’m a Super Healthy Kid.” The little superheroes are then asked to pose for photos in their capes to be displayed in WIC offices throughout the local agency. Great idea, DHD!





LOCAL AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS



Wayne County—WIC Community Garden

The Wayne County WIC Program regularly partners with the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program to cultivate the WIC Community Garden. The garden consists of a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers, and provides WIC clients opportunities for ongoing nutrition education and fresh produce throughout the summer months.

While the garden didn't come to fruition last year due to challenges presented by the pandemic, 2019 marked the garden's sixth successful year. Raised garden beds were replaced, new garden beds and benches were added, and 387 pounds of produce were raised and donated!



DHD 10—Feeding America Event

In early March 2020, DHD #10 WIC staff attended a Feeding America event hosted by the Manistee County Friendship Society. An abundance of fresh produce, milk, and baked goods were distributed to the community.

WIC staff conducted some very effective outreach by sharing promotional and educational materials, cutting boards, cookbooks, and crafts with area families. A wonderful time was had by all and DHD #10 looks forward to strengthening its partnership with the Friendship Society.





WIC CELEBRATIONS!



Congratulations to Laurel McCamman of Barry Eaton District Health Department on the birth of Emery McCamman on May 7, 2020!



Congratulations to Helen Williams of Detroit Urban League on welcoming Giovanni Williams, born July 31, 2020! His name means “a gift from God.”

Congratulations to Katherine Groble of the State WIC Vendor Relations Unit on her August 29, 2020 marriage to Daniel Tooman!



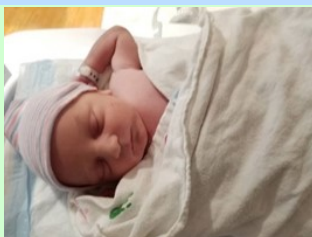
Congratulations to Krista Zenk of Detroit Urban League on the birth of Otto Allen Zenk, born October 13, 2020!

Congratulations to Kristina Brady of the State WIC DSM section on her November 6, 2020 marriage to John Brady!



Congratulations to Micia Eddins of Detroit Health Department on the birth of Carter Wayne Smith on November 22, 2020, which also happens to be his older brother’s birthday! Micia also recently graduated with a Master of Public Health!

Congratulations to Brooke Perry of Genesee County Health Department on the birth of Theodore David Perry on January 3, 2021! Theo was the first 2021 baby born at McLaren Flint!



Congratulations to Eric Johnson of the State WIC Finance and FMNP Unit, on the birth of Caden James Johnson on January 7, 2021!



RETIREMENT TRIBUTES



Libby Hrabonz

Huge shout-out to long-time WIC Dietitian Libby Hrabonz of Oakland County on her upcoming retirement at the end of April! She has been an invaluable member of our Nutrition Education Advisory Team (NEAT) since its inception and has been a tireless advocate for improved nutrition and health outcomes for WIC clients statewide. Be sure to check out her summary in this newsletter of a recently published article on WIC's impact on child nutrition.

Thank you for all your hard work Libby! I will miss our conversations and your invaluable contributions at Nutrition Education Workgroup and NEAT. You leave big shoes to fill and we wish you all the best on a retirement filled with much adventure and balanced meals!

- Tara Fischer, WIC Consultant, State of Michigan



Libby at a Project FRESH curbside distribution in summer 2020.

PARTING WORDS FROM LIBBY:

"I have enjoyed working for the WIC program and WIC has given me the opportunity to improve my nutrition skills. I have learned a lot about breastfeeding, pediatric nutrition, and client counseling and have enjoyed the opportunity to work on the NEAT and Nutrition Network and will miss the friendships made at those meetings."

"I have had the pleasure of working with Libby for the past year at WIC. She is one of the people who trained me when I first began here. She is always available when I have questions and is the queen of knowing all things food package! I'll miss her humor and willingness to share her knowledge with me. Wishing her all of the best on her new adventures!"

-Marci Kovsky, MPH, WIC Nutrition Technician, Oakland County Health Division

"Libby has been an amazing person to work with over the past 13 years. Her primary focus is our clients and promoting the WIC Program! She has an extensive knowledge of nutrition. She will be missed!"

-Kate Beszka, Office Supervisor, Oakland County Health Division

"Libby is one of the most helpful and knowledgeable nutritionists that you will ever meet. She helped train me when I first came to work for Oakland County as a Public Health Nutritionist making home visits. I have learned a lot from her about nutrition education and counseling techniques, including motivational interviewing. Libby goes above and beyond to help clients and co-workers in whatever way she can. I will miss her tremendously!"

-Kathy Takeshita, MPH, RD, CLS, Public Health Nutritionist, Oakland County Health Division

"The three D's that describe Libby: Devoted, Dedicated and Driven. Libby is passionate about teaching nutrition to our WIC clients. Libby shares her knowledge of nutrition and formulas with the WIC staff and clients. A quote that comes to mind when I think of Libby is, 'Our food should be our medicine and our medicine should be our food', by Hippocrates. Thank you, Libby, for the many years of service at Oakland County WIC. You will be missed greatly. Have fun playing golf!"

-Lisa Banks, WIC Coordinator, Oakland County Health Division

Libby, far right, with some coworkers during a grocery store tour.





RETIREMENT TRIBUTES



Kevin Sarb

On April 30, 2021, after nearly twelve years of service to the State of Michigan and eight with WIC, Kevin will be extending his weekends by five days! We want to take an opportunity to recognize Kevin for his work and dedication to the WIC program.

Kevin entertained our WIC team with his witty personality and his way of having an idiom for almost every situation (some of which he had to explain to us).

Kevin's last major tasks before retirement were to have a new Food Guide and updated food authorization process for adding new WIC eligible foods on a routine basis; even a pandemic could not keep him from achieving this goal.



For those agencies that were lucky enough to have Kevin for a consultant, you got to experience first-hand his passion for WIC. He made sure the State office was there to serve you and represent the LA perspective as we developed policy or implemented WIC enhancements. Kevin is a true civil servant.

Thank you, Kevin, for all you have done for the WIC program and for being an amazing co-worker. We wish you all the best in your next endeavors, whether traveling, creating a new batch of brew or spending lots of time enjoying being a grandpa!

"As a new manager, I always appreciated the way Kevin had of sharing his life experiences to help me navigate a situation without 'tell-me'. Expect to receive 'time to chat?' texts from me in the future."

- Julie Lothamer

"I will miss the drives up to work and our times in the office. Loved the podcasts that we would listen to and his comments on drivers. He only used the following phrase with less than desirable drivers on our rides or when less than optimal computer issues occurred in the office, 'Oh come on!!'

Thank you for your kindness and patience in training me. Enjoy traveling and your granddaughter, Kevin!"

- Dionne Moore-Smith

*"Kevin,
Well, this is the day you've been waiting for....and you have definitely earned it! It just won't be the same around here without you, but you know what they say, the show must go on! Wishing you much joy and happiness in this next chapter, Kevin!*

Happy Retirement!"

- Dawn Pline

"Thanks for all your support as my WIC consultant. You were always available when I needed you with questions or support. You were always patient and let me know the state supported me at Oakland County. You will truly be missed. Enjoy time with your 'wonderful blessing' as you referred to your grandchild when Addison was born."

- Lisa Oakland County WIC



RETIREMENT TRIBUTES



"Kevin and I go back in our careers to the 90's when he was a salesperson for Novartis Nutrition. Fast forward a few years (around 2009), Kevin and I met again, when we began working as colleagues at the Michigan Department of Education...a few job changes later and we again began working as colleagues in WIC. Over the years, Kevin could always be counted on to be organized with work, to update the state webpage, and most importantly to come through with the best 'Dad' jokes and family pictures."

- Gloria Zunker

"Congratulations & cheers to you, Kevin! Thank you for all of your help & guidance over the years. You will be missed! Wishing you every happiness in retirement!!"

- Babette Harris

Kevin and I started in WIC right around the same time and it's been a wild ride ever since!

Kevin's presence is always a breath of fresh air in his concise 'get-to-the-point' and 'get this item off the to-do list' manner, among a 'spend all day word-smithing', 'cross every t, dot every i' group of female nutrition professionals.

As bad as your dad (now grandpa) jokes and idioms are, you will be missed!

Enjoy your time with your family and thanks for all your patience in answering my never-ending formula and food package questions.

- Tara Fischer

"I loved his picture of his Wilson-self peering over his cubicle wall."

- Joyce Bryant



Kevin,

It will be difficult to see you go,

Oh how I will miss your cheery hellos!

But alas, even more fun,

Have been the many stories of old, and cringe-worthy food puns.

As another kindred Irish sprit leaves our midst,

I'm convinced you'll soon forget oxford commas exist.

And while I will treasure past laughs and good cheer,

I look forward to gathering again, over a good pint of beer.

AN IRISH TOAST: TO ALL THE DAYS HERE AND AFTER, MAY THEY BE FILLED WITH FOND MEMORIES, HAPPINESS AND LAUGHTER.
SLÁINTE (CHEERS)!

- Kristen Hanulcik

STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

Policies and Procedures:

- #2020-178: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 8/12/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-182: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 8/26/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-185: USDA Approved MI-WIC Policies – See E-Notice for updates to policies 2.13, 7.03, 8.02, 8.04, and 8.06.
- #2020-189: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 9/9/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-192: New Income Guidelines Cards & Income Webcast Archive – Webcast may be accessed [here](#).
- #2020-195: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 9/16/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-197: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 9/23/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-200: Civil Rights Course FY 2020-2021 Now Available – Required and may be accessed [here](#).
- #2020-205: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 9/30/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-227: Breastfeeding Policies 4.01, 4.02, & 4.03 Approved – See E-Notice for details.
- #2020-230: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 10/14/20 meeting minutes.
- #2020-237: 2021 Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Time Study – See E-Notice for details.
- #2020-245: WIC Coordinator Connections Meeting – See attachment for 11/18/20 meeting minutes.
- #2021-02: WIC Archived Webcasts Catalog Update – Archived webcasts may be accessed [here](#).
- #2021-08: Revised WIC Consultant Assignments – See attachment.
- #2021-17: Fair Hearing Procedure for Clients on the WIC Website – May be accessed [here](#).

Nutrition:

- #2020-202: Nutrition Education Updates – See E-Notice & attachments for more information on NEWG, resource materials, & wichealth.org Immunizations lesson.
- #2020-242: Update – IFF & IBP Maximums Increased for 8oz RTF – See E-Notice for details.
- #2020-243: Nutrition Networking Call 11/19/20 Follow-up – See attachments for meeting materials.
- #2020-254: Updated Yogurt Education Flyer – May be accessed [here](#).
- #2020-03: Nutrition Update and Reminder of next Nutrition Networking Call, January 21 – See E-Notice for details.
- #2021-06: February 25 Webcast Changed to the 2021 WIC Food Guide – Webcast archive may be accessed [here](#).
- #2021-20: Nutrition Networking Call 1/21/21 Follow-up – See attachments for meeting materials.

Vendor:

- #2020-190: Fall 2020 Vendor Newsletter – Newsletter may be accessed [here](#).
- #2020-244: Winter 2020 Vendor Newsletter – Newsletter may be accessed [here](#).
- #2020-246: Disablement of Non-transacting CVS Locations – See E-Notice & attachments for details.

STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

Breastfeeding:

#2020-225: Breastfeeding Workgroup Meeting Minutes – 10/16/20 – See attachments.

#2020-236: Breastfeeding Updates – Loving Support Awards, Peer Counselor Funding, Breastfeeding Trainings – See E-Notice and attachment for details.

#2021-04: Save the Dates for Potential Breastfeeding Trainings – See E-Notice for details.

#2021-14: Breastfeeding Connections January 2021 – May be accessed [here](#).

#2021-15: Change in Breastfeeding Basics Registration - Clerks/Techs will attend two ½ day trainings and Peer Counselors/CPAs/others will attend three ½ day trainings. Registration page may be accessed [here](#).

Legislation and Partner Updates:

#2020-194: USDA Approves Extension of WIC Waivers – Waivers active until 30 days after public health emergency ends.

#2020-207: 2020 Safe Sleep Education & Resources - MDHHS Safe Sleep website now has a link to locate [Safe Sleep Resources by County](#).

#2020-222: EGLE Clean Water Public Advocate Launches Online Tool to Report Drinking Water Concerns – Tool may be accessed [here](#).

#2020-260: January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month – See E-Notice for a number of resources to be used and shared on an ongoing basis.

#2021-05: National Public Health Emergency Extension – Approval of WIC waivers through 5/20/21.

Outreach:

#2020-201: Promotion & Retention Workgroup Minutes – 9/25/20 – See attachment for minutes.

#2020-253: ‘How to Shop with your WIC EBT Card’ Video Available on MDHHS WIC Website – May be accessed [here](#).

#2021-13: Promotion & Retention Workgroup Meeting Minutes 1/15/21 – See attachments.

Data and Systems:

#2020-199: Automated Benefits Issuance – Process Update Effective 10/5/20 – See E-Notice for details.

#2020-249: MI Bridges Online WIC Application – Launching 12/12/2020 – See attachment for training.

#2020-251: Announcement: Michigan WIC Systems Update – MIS contract awarded to Kunz, Leigh and Associates (KL&A).

#2020-259: MI-WIC Release 8.3 – Postponed – New release date not yet identified.

Events:

#2020-226: WIC Staff Announcement - Kaitlin Skwir, MS, RD, has assumed her role as WIC Public Health Consultant.

#2020-232: 2021 Virtual Michigan WIC Conference – Save the Date – The Conference will take place June 2-3, 2021.

Michigan Department of Health and
Human Services, WIC Division
Elliott-Larsen Building
320 S. Walnut St.
Lansing, MI 48913

Questions/Comments
E-mail: JacksonW6@michigan.gov



PLEASE
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UPCOMING EVENTS/TRAININGS/WORKGROUPS

March

9: Vendor Webcast
9-10: BF Basics—Clerks and Techs
9-11: BF Basics
11: Nutrition Ed Workgroup
16: Pharmacy Webcast
17-18: CPA Training
25: Advanced CPA Training

April

7-8: Senior PC Training, Part 1
13: BF Coordinator Training
14: Regional Vendor Forum—West
Michigan
14-15: Clerical Training
16: Milk Expression
20: New Peer Manager Training
21: Advanced CPA Training
28: Senior PC Training, Part 2

May

4-5: BF Basics—Clerks and Techs
4-6: BF Basics
14: Promotion & Retention
Workgroup
19-20: Clerical Training

Visit [MPHI](#)
to sign up for trainings!

*All events, trainings, and workgroups will be conducted virtually until further notice. Additionally, training dates are sometimes adjusted. Please be sure to verify training information on MPHI's [WIC Events Calendar](#), as this list may not reflect the final schedule.