



# WIC NEWS

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Special Supplemental Nutrition Program  
for Women, Infants, and Children

July 2023

## DIRECTOR UPDATE

Welcome to the July 2023 WIC News! We have exciting news to share and hope you enjoy learning about the latest and greatest from WIC.

As a nationally recognized, premier public health nutrition program, WIC has a positive and proven record of helping families live healthier lives. What we each choose to do every day in WIC influences everyone we interact with, and our actions contribute to the health of the community around us.

WIC has seen many advances and changes in the past few years. These are exciting times that offer new opportunities for collaboration, networking and support. What hasn't changed is our commitment to supporting the clients we serve by implementing cost-effective strategies and programs that maximize our ability to help and accomplish our mission.

Summer is here, and Michigan summers are beautiful. Be sure to spend some time with your family and friends enjoying all the beauty Michigan offers! Until then, best wishes for health and peace, and may we all lead well.

Warm regards,

Christina Herring-Johnson, WIC Director



*"Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."*

*-Francis of Assisi*

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Update

*Myra Lee Fowler, Social Determinants of Health Policy Analyst & DEI Committee Chair*

As we strive to eliminate systemic racism, address health inequities and promote an equitable and inclusive culture at Michigan WIC, the WIC DEI Committee is pleased to share the following key accomplishments:

- Formed a state workgroup to incorporate inclusive language in division practices, policies, and publications.
- Established the first WIC Client Advisory Council (CAC) in Michigan. Currently, the CAC plans to prioritize the following:
  - Improve the WIC client shopping experience.
  - Expand program outreach into the community.
  - Support the development and/or revision of training for WIC staff and WIC vendors related to implicit bias and client communication.

Michigan WIC also spoke at this year's National WIC Association Annual Conference in San Diego, California, to discuss best practices and lessons learned since the launch of the pilot.

- The Vendor Advisory Council (VAC) is currently working to develop a statewide post-shopping client survey for WIC staff and WIC vendors to better understand the client shopping experience and strategize how best to address issues related to food access and social determinants of health.

To begin to improve the WIC client shopping experience, Michigan WIC will be hosting a joint meeting between the VAC and CAC in July.

## Special Events:

To recognize Black Maternal Health Week in April, Michigan WIC hosted a virtual event featuring a panel discussion on granny midwifery care and the valuable contributions of Black women to the profession. The panel also identified action steps to destigmatize breastfeeding in the Black community. WIC collaborated with several community organizations to plan this event, including the University of Michigan's Fetal Medicine Division, Mothering Justice and Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association. The event brought together WIC staff, community organizations that serve teenage mothers and birthing people, and the general public.

## How to get involved?

The DEI Committee looks forward to working with our local agencies to advance health equity and address social determinants of health needs within our WIC community. To make an impact across the state, we would like to learn more about what your local agency is doing to promote diversity, equity and inclusion at WIC by sharing your feedback in response to the questions below.

1. What DEI initiatives is your local agency currently working on to improve workplace culture and/or the WIC client experience?
2. What guidance/resources would be useful from the DEI Committee to support DEI efforts at your local agency?

Please submit responses via email to Myra Lee Fowler at [LeeFowlerM@michigan.gov](mailto:LeeFowlerM@michigan.gov).

# National Nutrition Month Celebrations

## Oakland County Health Department

Oakland WIC hosted a taste-testing event and grocery store tour to celebrate.



## District Health Department #10

DHD #10 provided clients with the National Nutrition Month trivia page, along with the client feedback form. Clients were encouraged to review the handout, complete the feedback form and mail it back to the office. Participants who returned their forms were entered into a drawing for some awesome WIC swag.

**1. What nutrient is important for bone health and found in milk?** \_\_\_\_\_

- Iron
- Fiber
- Calcium

**2. Whole grains** \_\_\_\_\_

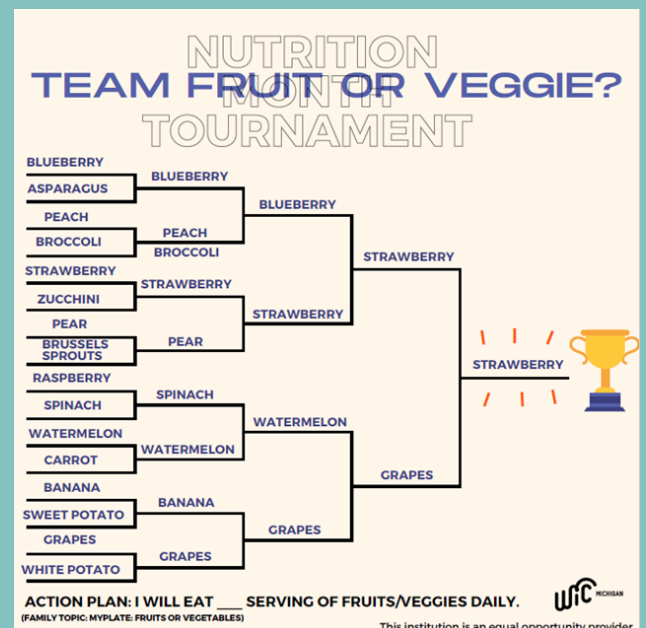
- Are higher in fiber than white/refined grains
- Have more naturally occurring nutrients than white/refined grains
- Come in many varieties such as oatmeal, bread, pasta, rice, or tortillas
- All of the above

## Macomb County Health Department

Macomb WIC Registered Dietitian Arturo Gregory shares details of the Macomb County National Nutrition Month celebrations. While they passed out some incentives and nutrition education to their clients, they arguably had more fun amongst the staff by starting their own March Madness bracket created by the Nutrition Education Advisory Team (NEAT). Instead of college basketball teams, they put fruits and veggies head-to-head to see which food group came out on top. Plus, there was an added incentive that the winning fruit/veggie would be part of a snack during their next staff meeting.

Each afternoon, Arturo sent out a Google survey to staff asking which food they'd rather eat. For example, "Would you rather eat blueberries or asparagus?" After quite a few days of some really tough decisions, Macomb County is unanimously Team Fruit with strawberries as the winner.

A few staff brought homemade strawberry-themed snacks like strawberry granola oatmeal, strawberry danishes drizzled with chocolate ganache and strawberry wafer cookies! Arturo would like to send a special thank you to the NEAT for developing this awesome bracket. It gave Macomb staff a nice change of pace and a morale boost.



# LA Highlights

## Detroit Health Department

Cidni Howard, WIC Breastfeeding Peer Program Manager and Promotion and Retention Coordinator, shares that they have recently seen a 59% increase in the number of women who received breastfeeding education services. The number jumped from 584 in August 2022 to 931 in February 2023. Great work, Detroit WIC team!

## Macomb County Health Department

The Macomb County Health Department WIC Program was awarded the NWA Health Equity Champion Agency Award in recognition of its work on the WIC Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion (AHEAD) grant in 2021-2022. [Click here for a project fact sheet with lots of great information.](#) Congratulations, Macomb County!

## Marquette County Health Department

Our friends in Marquette found themselves buried under several feet of snow in a May 1 storm. Jolene Spencer, Marquette WIC Coordinator, shares some photographic evidence of the fun. We hope you have dug yourselves out, friends, and here's to a nice warm break for all of you!



## Washtenaw County Health Department

Washtenaw County WIC Coordinator Gayathri Akella shares that they will be heading to the furthest corner of Washtenaw County in their medical RV later this summer to host WIC on Wheels. They will be debuting this service on a county food distribution day, and they hope for a great turnout of WIC-eligible families.



# Training, Evaluation & Compliance Corner

## Referrals: A Cornerstone of WIC

Heather Sanders, MA, Public Health Consultant

Helping clients connect with other needed services is one of WIC's four goals.

Referrals to other health, welfare, and social services help to meet the needs of participants and assist in improving health and achieving positive outcomes. The referral process also informs applicants who are ineligible for the WIC Program of other programs and services that may benefit them.



In fiscal year 2022, a total of 1,307,928 referrals were made for WIC clients throughout the state of Michigan, including 64,735 referrals to a breastfeeding peer counselor, 124,960 to a dentist, 110,990 to a doctor, 42,359 to a food pantry, 77,521 to Maternal Infant Health Program, 142,755 to the Medicaid Program, and 157,173 to SNAP.

At the conclusion of the WIC appointment, the client or family is provided with the referral document listing all referrals made during their WIC appointment. This document includes the name of the referral, address, phone number and any other necessary information.

It is important to continue to update local agency community resources within MI-WIC. This ensures that the client receives the correct contact information for the specific referral(s) provided during their appointment.

Local agencies can find more information on referrals in [Policy 6.02, Referrals](#) and the help field in MI-WIC by clicking on the question mark at the upper right corner of the referral screen. Questions about referrals may be directed to Heather Sanders at [SandersH@michigan.gov](mailto:SandersH@michigan.gov).

## Breastfeeding Update

### Milk Expression at Work: Protected by Law

Kristina Doyle, RD, IBCLC

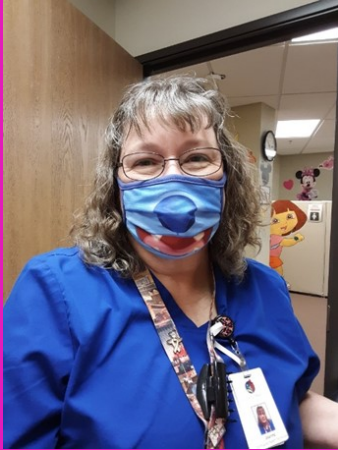
We have some exciting news to share in the world of lactation! The [PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act](#) was signed into law by President Biden on December 29, 2022, as part of the 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, and is in addition to the [Break Time for Nursing Mothers](#) law. What does this mean for parents who need to express their milk at work? They now have the right to:

- Take break time and space to pump breast milk at work, including teachers and nurses.
- Be paid for their milk-expression breaks.
- File a lawsuit against their employer for non-compliance.

We encourage WIC staff to spread the good news to clients! Should they have any questions, your agency's breastfeeding peer counselor is available for support.

# WIC STAFF CELEBRATIONS

## Community First Health Centers



After more than 30 years of service to WIC, Community First Health Centers announces the retirement of WIC Technician Joanne Swensen on June 30. Joanne began her WIC career at the Macomb County Health Department and has worked for Community First Health Centers for the last 16 years, which she helped open. Her favorite thing about working in WIC is helping WIC families and watching their children grow and be healthy. She will miss her co-workers and has this piece of advice for new technicians: “Put yourself in your client’s shoes and always remember to use your WIC Policy Manual.”

In retirement, she looks forward to enjoying quiet days and reading her many books and e-books. Congratulations, Joanne!

## Health Department of Northwest Michigan

Allie Monroe, WIC lead nurse and Nutrition Education Coordinator, welcomed Keeley Jean Monroe into her family on April 24. Keeley weighed 6 lbs., 13 oz., and was 21 inches long. Mom and baby are both doing well! Congratulations, Allie!



## State Agency:

We congratulate the following State WIC employees on their recent accomplishments:

- Amy Thompson, WIC Division Policy Specialist, has earned a master’s degree in public health.
- Heather Sanders is celebrating five years of service to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- Dawn Pline is celebrating ten years of service to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.



## State Agency

Heather Sanders’s son, Hayden Sanders, a freshman on the varsity swim team for Charlotte Public School (second from right), and three of his teammates set the school record in the 200 Medley Relay. Hayden was the anchor and swam the 50-freestyle leg of the relay. They are all very excited and look forward to next season. Great job, Hayden!

# WIC STAFF CELEBRATIONS

## Macomb

The Macomb County Health Department announces the retirement of WIC Coordinator Martha Brooks.

Martha is a Wayne State University dietetics graduate. She first applied to work for WIC at the Detroit Health Department in 1985. At the time, both written and oral exams were required, and Martha was not their first choice, scoring only 76%! She finally got hired in 1986 and worked at Detroit WIC in a number of different positions for nine years. During her time in Detroit, her co-workers included Nancy Erickson, Diane Ewell and many other WIC folks who are still around! In 1995, Martha accepted the WIC Coordinator position at the Macomb County Health Department, where she has been for almost 29 years.



Martha has seen so many changes in the WIC program over the past 38 years. She remembers blank coupons and the rubber stamps used to create a food package. She remembers a time when there were no E-Notices because there was no email. She remembers the thousands of paper charts because there was no MI-WIC. And she will never forget the past three years, which were the most challenging years she can remember.

Martha shares these words of wisdom: “For those who are newer to WIC, stick with it! WIC is a noble and honorable career and if you can get through a pandemic and a formula shortage, you will reap many rewards, make many friends, and experience much joy.”

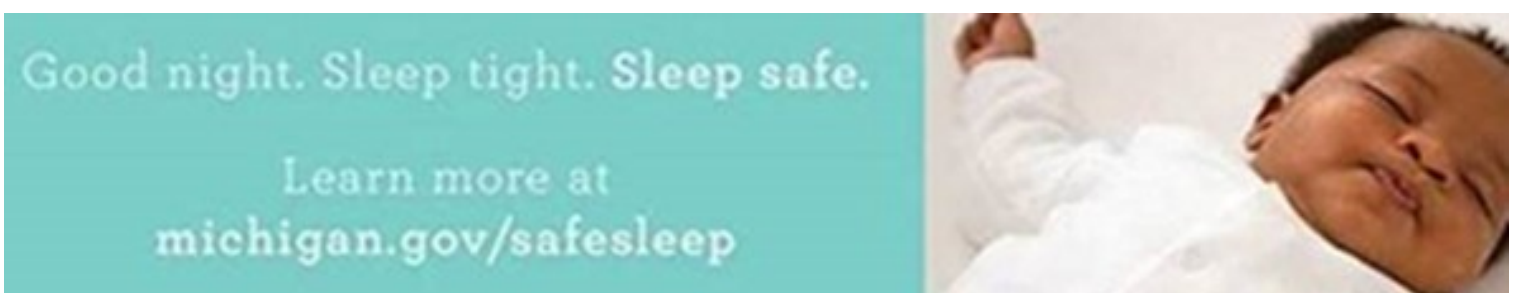
Congratulations, Martha! You will be missed!

## Safe Sleep Update

### Indigenous Infant Safe Sleep Series

The MDHHS Safe Sleep Program is pleased to announce the newly released Indigenous Infant Safe Sleep Series shared by the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ITC). These safe sleep materials have been carefully developed with the latest research in mind to share with providers and families. They offer information about the various ways that families can support safe sleeping environments to ensure the health and development of babies in our communities. They include information on infant safe sleep, breastfeeding, skin-to-skin care, and proper baby carrier and cradleboard use.

The series is found on ITC’s [Infant Safe Sleep page](#) in the Additional Resources section.



# STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

## Policies and Procedures:

#2023-41: Updated ME Resource, Annual Review Tools on Website – [Click here to access the tools.](#)

#2023-61: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 2/28/23 Meeting Minutes and Chat Record – Please see E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record and slide deck.

#2023-75: Newly Revised Michigan WIC Policy 10.03 - System Security and MI-WIC Access – See E-Notice for summary of changes.

#2023-78: Destruction of WIC Records – See E-Notice for information on routine record retention.

#2023-79: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 3/22/23 Meeting Minutes, Chat Record, Medicaid Redetermination Resources - Please see E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record and slide deck.

#2023-89: State WIC Agency Office Relocation and Fax Machine Access – State office has moved from 6<sup>th</sup> floor to 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Elliott-Larsen building.

#2023-103: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 4/26/23 Meeting Minutes, Chat Record, and Slides - Please see E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record and slide deck.

#2023-104: New Food Guide Effective 3/1/23 & Revised Policy 7.02 Authorized WIC Foods – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-106: Revised Manually Assigned Risk (MAR) Tool – [Click here to access revised tool.](#)

#2023-108: 2023 WIC Project FRESH Updates – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-114: Newly Revised Policy 1.10 - Voter Registration – [Click here to access revised policy.](#)

## Nutrition:

#2023-37: Emergent Situation – Similac Transition Plan #6: LA Staff Return to Similac Transition QA, Formula Updates, & Store Inventories - See E-Notice for details and please refer to subsequent E-Notices with the same title, numbered sequentially, for additional formula information.

#2023-40: Reckitt/Mead Johnson Recalls Two Batches of Prosobee 12.9 oz Simply Plant Based Infant Formula Because of Possible Health Risk – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-42: March is National Nutrition Month – See E-Notice and attachments for materials.

#2023-43: Formula Updates: New WIC Authorized Formulas Effective March 1, 2023, WIC Formula Webcast, & Puramino Availability – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-53: Happy National Nutrition Month and Exciting Announcements! – See E-Notice for information on Advanced CPA award and nutrition education incentive items.

#2023-67: Perrigo Recall of Certain Lots of Gerber Good Start SoothePro Powdered Infant Formula Purchased after March 5, 2023 – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-68: Nutrition Month Reminders and Nutrition Education Workgroup Follow-up – See E-Notice and attachments for meeting materials.

#2023-76: Pediasure with Fiber Changing to 4 packs- Action Needed – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-83: Formula Updates – See E-Notice for information on EleCare, Pediasure Harvest, and Kate Farms products.

#2023-110: Aunt Millie's Swirl Whole Grain Bread Discontinued – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-111: Pepperidge Farm Stone Ground 100% Whole Wheat & Jewish Rye Whole Grain Rye Seeded – Both products to be discontinued.

#2023-118: Emergent Situation – Abbott Updates – ACTION REQUIRED – See E-Notice for information on Abbott products and RTF formula use.

## Breastfeeding:

#2023-70: Breastfeeding Updates and Upcoming Events – See E-Notice for information on PC survey webcast, Black Maternal Health Week, and Breastfeeding Workgroup.

#2023-84: Spring Breastfeeding Connections & Poster Amounts – [Click here to access newsletter.](#)

# STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

## Legislation and Partner Updates:

#2023-35: Changes Coming to Food Assistance Program (FAP) Benefits – COVID-19 Food Assistance Emergency Allotment ended in February.

## Data and Systems:

#2023-38: Present for Certification Ad Hoc Report – December 2022 – January 2023 – See E-Notice and attachment for details.

#2023-44: FY 2023 Local Agency Caseload and Expenditures Report – See attachment for report.

#2023-57: MI-WIC Report Survey 2023 – [Click here for survey.](#)

#2023-66: Present for Certification Ad Hoc Report – February 2023 – See attachment for Report.

#2023-82: MI-WIC Notifications Reference Updates – See attachment for updated reference.

#2023-99: MI-WIC Release 9.4 Reminder – Release implemented April 28-30, 2023.

#2023-100: Changes to Michigan WIC Website – [Michigan WIC website](#) underwent a redesign that launched May 1.

#2023-116: MI-WIC Modernization – Local Agency Listening Session Registration Available – See E-Notice for details.

#2023-117: New Report Matrix Tool for Clinic, Admin and E-Forms Modules – See attachments for tools.

## Promotion and Retention:

#2023-55: WIC Connect Social Media Toolkit – See attachment for toolkit.

#2023-63: March WIC News – [Click here to access newsletter.](#)

#2023-113: No 2024 NWA Calendar – See E-Notice for details.

## Vendor:

#2023-87: WIC Vendor Newsletter - Spring 2023 – [Click here to access newsletter.](#)



## Balsamic Green Bean Salad

### Ingredients:

- 2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 1-1/2-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 4 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

### Instructions:

1. Place beans in a 6-qt. stockpot; add water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cook, covered, 8-10 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and immediately place in ice water. Drain and pat dry.
2. In a small bowl, whisk oil, lemon juice, vinegar, salt, garlic powder, mustard and pepper. Drizzle over beans. Add onion; toss to coat. Refrigerate, covered, at least 1 hour. Just before serving, stir in tomatoes and cheese.

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/balsamic-green-bean-salad/>

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Questions/Comments  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS/TRAININGS/WORKGROUPS

### July

14: Breastfeeding Basics  
20: NSP Webinar

### August

2: Clerical Training  
8: Lab Training  
9: Anthro Training  
15-16: Advanced Clinical Lactation Skills  
17: Clerk/Tech Workgroup

\*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.

**Visit MPHI to sign up for trainings!**