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Press Release

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WIC changes bring more variety, healthier foods to Alaskans

Biggest change in 30 years supports healthy lifestyles for 25,000 Alaskans on WIC

(Anchorage, AK) — Alaska's Women, Infants and Children Nutrition (WIC) program is changing to provide more variety, healthier foods, and healthier choices for infants. On Oct. 1, new food choices for women and children will include healthier options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat milk and a variety of whole grain foods.

The WIC program will also increase the amount of food provided to mothers who breast-feed their babies full time to better promote and support breast-feeding.

"These healthy food choices serve as a continuum of our efforts to promote better nutrition and healthier food choices," said Ellie Fitzjarrald, Director of Public Assistance. "The addition of these new foods will strengthen these efforts by increasing and improving nutrition for WIC participants."

Each month, more than 25,000 women, infants and children in Alaska participate in the WIC program, a federally funded nutrition program for lower-income and nutritionally-at-risk pregnant and breast-feeding women, their infants and young children.

The changes are intended to better meet the needs of the wide range of WIC participants. Under the new rules:

- WIC clients can purchase whole grains and fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Beginning at 6 months, all infants receive infant fruits and vegetables, while fully breast-fed infants also receive infant meats.
- Soy milk and tofu may be given as an alternative to milk.
- The amount of milk, eggs, juice and cheese is reduced for women and children.
- Juice is eliminated for infants.

More information on these changes, including the new WIC food list, an informational video, and audio Public Service Announcement can be found at <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/nutri/>.

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