

WIC Local Agency Region 4 – Executive Summary  
January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012

The WIC Region 4 Teleconference was held on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 for all agencies currently providing WIC services, or interested in providing WIC services Western, Northwestern and Northern Alaska. Currently, four agencies provide WIC services in this part of Alaska: Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), Maniilaq Association (MA), North Slope Borough (NSB), and Norton Sound Regional Health Corporation (NSRHC).

Tracy Gregg- Kotzebue, WIC Coordinator, MA; Khadija Alharbi, WIC Coordinator, YKHC; and Jennifer Johnson, WIC Coordinator, NSB were all present on the call. One grantee, NSB, submitted additional comments via email.

*Summary of Comments*

Under the proposed program changes, YKHC reported no anticipated impacts to service delivery.

Two agencies, MA and NSB, expressed concerns about staffing, the ability to travel as needed, and requested greater clarify about the staffing structure. Travel time and logistics were cited as concerns to both MA and NSB. Another concern cited by NSB and MA staff was the potential loss of financial contributions to support the WIC program. Staff from MA also noted that managing staff living in remote locations could be difficult.

Staff from YKHC indicated their agency is interested in continuing to provide WIC services, and not interested in partnering. Staff from NSB and MA both indicated they need additional information to make a determination about whether they are interested in continuing to provide services either as lead agency or as a partner. Staff from NSB and MA both requested a model for how they might structure delivery of regional services.

Three agencies, NSB, YKHC, and MA, each shared that the proposed change to require grantees to have a RD would not be a change for their programs, but noted that recruiting RD's to rural Alaska is difficult, particularly when large amounts of travel may be required. Staff from MA expressed the hope that the proposed staffing structure would allow for more than one RD to support each service area.

Two agencies, NSB and MA, cited administrative savings as a possible advantage of the proposed regionalization, but also stated they wondered if those savings would result in direct services or even materialize at all. Staff from NSB reiterated that they do a good job keeping staff continuity which leads to high quality services for WIC participants, and that while their case load is low, that should be considered.

*Analysis of Comments*

There is only one grantee, YKHC, who is likely to remain unaffected by the proposed regionalization. Their proposed service region stays the same, and they currently meet the case load and staffing requirements. The proposed regionalization of Northern and Northwest

Alaska would require a lead agency to expand the physical space of its service area and caseload significantly. Currently, none of these local agencies serve 1,000 participants and each one is a local government or tribal organization that delivers services to a specific geographic area, and provides additional program funds to support their WIC programs.