
RE: WIC Update March 8

From: Wayne, Kathleen A (HSS)
Sent: Friday, March 08, 2013 3:45 PM
To: HSS DPA WIC Coordinators; 'Julie Serstad'; 'susan.hennon@searhc.org'; 'Kathy O'Gara'; 'kari.natwick@searhc.org'
Cc: HSS DPA WIC Juneau; HSS DPA WIC Anchorage; Olejasz, Aimee M (HSS); 'Danielle Rybicki'
Subject: WIC Update March 8

Hi Everyone,

As mentioned in the quarterly LA teleconference last Thursday, although we do not have the final federal FY 13 WIC funding allocation amount, we hope to address the 5.1% sequestration reduction through belt-tightening measures. Dana will be talking to each local agency to identify SY 13 unspent funds that can be used towards meeting the 5.1% reduction.

At the teleconference, I forgot to mention that we want to avoid telling clients that we do not have enough money to serve everyone needing WIC services. During these types of national budget concerns, WIC caseload tends to decrease because clients choose to remove themselves from the program in order for other "more needy" families to have access to WIC services. We need to maintain and grow our caseload to show there is a need for WIC services. Please see the results of the caseload survey below.

Take care,
Kathleen

1. [Tuna Recall—see attached.](#)
2. Nutrition Risk 11---Thank you for attending the training on Nutrition Risk Revision 11. We've attached the pages that will appear in the nutrition risk manual on the website, when it is updated this summer. We don't have an exact date when we will begin using the new growth charts and risk factors—we're awaiting guidance from the USDA. We'll have one more training before we start. Please call or email Jennifer Johnson with questions- 465-8104 or Jennifer.johnson@alaska.gov

3.



SPIRIT Project Update: On March 6th we finalized the SPIRIT transfer contract with Walker Computing (Mark and Bobbi Walker). They are both extremely knowledgeable about the SPIRIT system having implemented it in Montana and having worked as contractors transferring SPIRIT for Maine.

The Kick Off meeting for the Walkers will be in Anchorage on March 20th and 21st. They will begin work on our system during that visit.

Results on questions about caseload

We asked a few questions about caseload on a recent Friday Update. Here are the results. Thanks to the agency that answered our questions. We have included a few thoughts as well-

What do you think is contributing to a drop in our participation?

- Staffing- not having enough

Other thoughts...

- With increased benefits & easier access to SNAP and TANF programs, WIC may appear less “attractive” to potential participants. Nationally WIC caseloads have been dropping while SNAP enrollment is at a record high.
- Birth rates are falling.
- Nationally WIC clients have to wait too long at the facility where they are receiving services. Reports of overcrowded, noisy facilities with nothing for children to do were barriers as well.
- Missed appointments create problems and increases in no-show rates.
- Shifts in military populations with deployments negatively impacting caseloads.
- Out migration of rural participants to more urban areas.
- Stagnant funding impacts ability to hire additional staff and secure desirable clinic locations.

What ideas do you have to help increase participation while maintain quality client services and nutrition education?

- Utilizing the Medicaid list to call and mail applications.

Other thoughts...

- Using reports out of AKWIC to identify clients that need recertification’s- Report #102 Reminder Letters prior to recertification appointment & 202 Reminder letters prior to termination date)
- Other reports 205 Estimated Due Dates, #512 Recert dates for clients who will not be eligible, #513 Recert dates for clients who will be eligible for recert, #529 Missed Issuance
- Reminder calls and letters
- Following up on no-shows

- Encouraging pregnant & postpartum women to use Text-4-Baby- there is an automatic appointment reminder function in this service. Go to: <https://www.text4baby.org/> to have moms sign up. Three (3) free text messages are sent / week until the baby is one year old. Appointment reminders are in addition to the health and safety text messages.
- Consider going to a no appointment system with a good no-show policy to maintain or build caseload
- Get the word out! WIC is more than just free food.
 - WIC teaches lasting healthy habits, contributing to better health outcomes.
 - Nourishes moms, babes and children.
 - Provides breastfeeding support.
 - Provides invaluable health care and social services referrals.
 - Saves lives.
 - Helps hardworking, struggling families to keep their families healthy.
 - Helps families make ends meet and get ahead.
 - Helps struggling families support children with special needs.
 - Supports working mothers and single mothers.
 - Inspires dignity, self-worth and empowerment.

What are the barriers to service delivery and for client participation?

- Being short staffed

Other thoughts...

- Cold weather during the winter months
- Transportation issues
- Weather issues interfering with village travel for WIC staff
- Fish camp during summer months
- Having unfunded mandates and increased expectations for quality services with stagnant funding
- Not having enough qualified (CPA) staff available when there are staffing shortages

What is working in your office that contributes to a thriving WIC caseload?

- Being fully staffed

Other thoughts...

- Keeping regular office hours and days; ability for clients to leave messages and returning messages promptly
- Contracting with another agency or an individual when short staffed to make sure the processing standards are being met
- Good outreach plan and execution of the plan
- Consistent travel to off-site communities
- Planning village travel throughout the year and not at the end of the fiscal year (running out of time to do travel)
- Offering a variety of ways for clients to receive secondary nutrition education
- Staff retention (offering competitive pay and educational opportunities)

