
From: Johnson, Jennifer S (HSS)
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2014 3:29 PM
To: HSS DPA WIC Coordinators; HSS DPA WIC Juneau; HSS DPA WIC Anchorage
Cc: Perham-Hester, Kathy A (HSS); O'Gara, Kathy (HSS Sponsored); Welch, Scooter (HSS Sponsored); Rybicki, Danielle (HSS Sponsored); Bennis, Don; Olejasz, Aimee M (HSS)
Subject: WIC Update October 16, 2014

Hello Everyone,

The State WIC Office will be closed on Friday, October 17, in observance of Alaska Day.

Have a good weekend, everyone

Jennifer

1. **2014 PDF**---Attached is an updated table for the Permanent Fund Dividend, by household size. For questions, contact Dana Kent at Dana.kent@alaska.gov or 465-5322.
2. **Questions from the Coordinator's Conference:** Attached you will find the answers to the questions raised at during the AKWICC meeting, and the questions which came in during the conference. Please follow up with Jennifer Johnson (465-8104) or Dana Kent (465-5322) with questions and comments.
3. **FARMERS MARKET PROGRAM:** Our FMNP season is wrapping up. Please remind your participants to use their remaining FMNP coupons by October 31st! If you have any questions, comments, suggestions please direct them to Erin Khmelev at erin.khmelev@alaska.gov.
4. **Vendor Newsletter:** the most recent newsletter from the AK WIC Program Vendor Unit to the vendors is attached. Please contact Erin Khmelev with questions erin.khmelev@alaska.gov
5. Sandy Harbanuk, Vendor Coordinator, will be on annual leave starting on October 23 and ending on November 13. If you need assistance from the Vendor Management Unit, please contact Erin Khmelev, (907)465-8630, erin.khmelev@alaska.gov, or Kristen Stouder, (907)465-6399, kristen.stouder@alaska.gov
6. **PRAMS survey posters:** The Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Project is an on-going survey of mothers of newborns initiated by the State of Alaska Division of Public Health, Section of Maternal, Child and Family Health in 1990. PRAMS was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Reproductive Health and is part of CDC's initiative to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight. PRAMS collects state-specific, population-based data on maternal attitudes and experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. Research has indicated that maternal behaviors during pregnancy may influence infant birth weight and mortality rates. The goal of the PRAMS project is to improve the health of mothers and infants by reducing adverse outcomes such as low birth weight, infant mortality and morbidity, and maternal morbidity. PRAMS provides state-specific data for planning and assessing health programs and for describing maternal experiences that may contribute to maternal and infant health. Here's the link to the PRAMS page:
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/mchepi/prams/default.aspx> if you'd like to learn more about the program or the data they collect and how it's used.

Moms with new babies who are selected receive the PRAMS survey in the mail. Women who complete the survey and mail it in receive a \$10 gift card for Carrs/Safeway, Fred Meyers, or the AC. Often, the survey is not completed. This year, there is a poster campaign to familiarize expectant moms with the survey, so that they will be more likely to fill it out when they see it in the mail. Each agency will be receiving two posters directly from Kathy Perham- Hester. If you'd like more copies, please contact Kathy directly at Katherine.hester@alaska.gov Please post these in places where participants will have a chance to see and read them.

Nice to Know:

1. **Mercury in Fish:** Becky attended a meeting of public health nurses in Anchorage, and she returned with some information about mercury:

The Alaska Division of Public Health encourages Alaskans to consume Alaskan fish. There are many of health benefits from catching and eating fish. For women who are pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant, and children, the Division has developed fish consumption recommendations to minimize exposure to mercury from a small number of fish species. See the guide here:

<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/eh/fish/FishConsumptionCalc.pdf> . This is a simple way to know how much to eat of each fish. For more information, see the full guidelines:

<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/eh/fish/FishConsumptionAdvice2014.pdf> .

To get an idea of how much mercury is in your body or for any questions about fish consumption and contaminants call the Hair Mercury Biomonitoring program in the Division of Public Health at (907) 269-8000. The program can provide you with a kit for free hair mercury testing that is available free to Alaskans. More information on the program here: <http://epi.alaska.gov/eh/biom/default.htm>

Please contact Jennifer Johnson (465-8014) with questions or suggestions, or if you think we should put out more information about Alaska fish.

Q and A's from the 2014 Coordinator's conference

1. Is there an updated SPIRIT training?

Yes. On WIC website, all modules including the Master Calendar and 2.19 new version preview of changes are included. Information about this went out with the 10/10 WIC Friday Update.

2. Can we have access to Test program?

This is possible, but would require a lot of planning to set up. There are some inherent risks to having a test database available at the local agency. Most other states currently using SPIRIT do not allow their local agency clinics access to the test database at the clinic.

3. Will SPIRIT have breast pump function soon?

In progress.

4. Will WIC be considered when legislative funds are available?

AKWICC can lobby the legislature for funding. However, State staff cannot do so. We are not aware that the legislature has set aside funding for WIC. We receive a small amount in General Funds.

5. Is there any projection regarding the amount our agencies funding can be cut?

One of the ways to project is to take your performance standard and divide it by your current caseload, then multiply the number by your full WIC grant amount (do not include BFPC funds in this calculation).

6. How much notice will we receive about cuts?

Caseload performance will be evaluated in January 2015. The Legislature has mandated that the Department's programs align with the Results-Based Budgeting model of measuring performance. A second letter was sent to you on 9/22 concerning recalculation of funding based on caseload/performance.

7. Has all State staff spent recent time observing a clinic (Not including ME)?

Yes, during SPIRIT roll-out. State staffs are willing to come out to your clinics but the cost of the visit will come out of your WIC grant because, except for MEs, we don't have travel funds

8. Can we have a detailed list of what is allowed on WIC? To be available for staff?

Could you give us more details on this question? Are you talking about food list or type of purchases allowed with WIC funds?

9. Can we have an up-to-date training guide/instructions on SPIRIT Utilities site?

Would like to know what problems LAs are having in order to be able to respond fully to this question – or is this still applicable after the conference presentation?

10. Is there a way to see FVV redemption rates?

Yes.

Open State Office module

File/System Outputs/Reports/"Food Instrument Redemption"

Choose "Agency" or "Clinic" radio button

Choose agency and/or clinic from drop down lists

Choose category from drop down list

Display on Screen

Search for these FI Types:

FI Type	Value	Category
26388	\$8	Children/Infant
2699	\$10	Women
2691	\$6	Children/Infant

Find "Percent Issued/Redeemed" in farthest right column.

11. Can we have an updated list on what Medicaid will approve regarding food and ICD-10 code?

ICD-9 codes are still being used and are acceptable to Medicaid. According to our contact at Medicaid, ICD-10 code implementation has been postponed until October 1, 2015. There haven't been any recent reports of ICD-9 codes being rejected. If this persists to be a problem, please let Jennifer Johnson (465-8104) know.

12. Why do Bf moms show up as "missed" when they are >6 months PP, but BF some?

More info is needed to respond to this question. Please send an example to Terry at Terry.Hoskinson@alaska.gov.

13. Will our numbers take into account possible computer glitches?

We are not aware of any data problems in SPIRIT, but could you give an example of a glitch that you are referring to? Otherwise, it is helpful for clinic staff to review procedures such as; two-way links, print Medicaid checks for infants less than 6 mos, print mostly BF checks, etc.

14. Are you aware of the client response to the wait time caused by SPIRIT?

No, but we could incorporate a question on this into the annual WIC survey.

15. Any progress on going paperless with applications for in-person certifications?

We have started the lengthy process of reviewing our applications. It could take up to a year to implement the changes. We will include the USDA and Local Agencies in due time in this process.

16. Can we revisit business rules regarding charting, meaning how we have to add an extra chart note?

Please clarify what is meant by this question.

17. Why do we have a 3-5 food package?

It is hardwired into SPIRIT which means we cannot change it in the current version.

18. Why do we collect birth data after 2 years old for new clients? We don't use the stats?

You don't have to. You can click "unknown."

19. Will connectivity be improved? Currently is worse than before and much slower.

There is nothing more that can be done to improve connectivity with the central server. Explore more support from your local IT staff if they can help streamline networking.

20. Can we access clinic 88 clients that were from our clinics to be used for outreach?

Yes, Clinic 88 clients have to be transferred into your clinic to view or you can view them through the State module. We will work on a report for clients under 5 and have a report in SPIRIT Utilities site.

21. Is there a list of ICD-10 codes we can accept for ENPR?

Yes, the list of codes is on the ENPR form and on the AK WIC website. The codes currently used are ICD-9. According to our contact at Medicaid, ICD-10 implementation

has been postponed until October 1, 2015. The State WIC Office worked with Medicaid to straighten out the issue with the ICD-9 code for prematurity being rejected, and we were told it's been corrected. The state has not received any more reports that it's being rejected. If RD approved ENPRs are rejected, please contact Jennifer Johnson at 465-8104.

22. What is the State's plan with social media? LA does their own or combined efforts?

We will approach a social media campaign through a proposed OA project to create a state wide media blitz to revitalize the WIC profile.

23. How often do minimum stocks get updated? Suggestion: Should always be in the size sold, EX: oz of fish w/# of cans, boxes of dried milk, etc...

Minimum stocks are updated only when there is a significant change to our approved foods, or if indicated by an issue with vendors. For food categories that have approved food items in multiple sizes / volumes, such as canned fish and infant foods, we require an amount in total ounces. For foods that can be counted per item, such as milks, we require a minimum number. In response to vendor requests, we have adjusted many items to be equivalent to a case or cases (e.g. UHT milk, 144 cartons = 12 cases). For fruits and vegetables, we use the federal minimum requirement of two types each of fresh fruits and vegetables, and a retail dollar value. The Alaska WIC Minimum Stock Requirements were revised in coordination with the Final Food Rule effective October 1, 2014, and they are posted on the WIC website

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/nutri/downloads/Vendors/Alaska-WIC-Minimum-Stock-Requirements.pdf/>

24. The allergy doctor said that she would not start the sibling of a multiple-allergy child on general formulas. Will being the sibling of a multiple-allergy child be an acceptable risk for an ENPR?

The rules for the ENPR are as they appear in the Policy and Procedure Manual. An ENPR must be completed by a health care provider, with at least one qualifying condition (diagnosis). If the doctor completes an ENPR and there is an acceptable ICD-9 code for the specific child, the RD can approve it, if appropriate.

25. Will the food packages for ½ UHT ½ canned or powdered milk for rural vendors automatically switch over in SPIRIT or does this need to be done manually?

State staff continue to review this policy. Dependent upon the final outcome, it may be possible for food packages to update automatically.

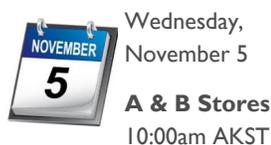


Alaska WIC Vendor Newsletter

October 2014 — Volume 12, Issue 8

VENDOR TELECONFERENCES:

Please make sure a Manager or WIC Trainer attends one of the following teleconferences.



1 (800) 281—5354
Passcode: 259225

Interactive vendor training is required by federal regulations. This is your opportunity to get updates and ask your questions!

FALL PRICE SURVEYS DUE OCT. 22! We would like to thank everyone who has submitted a complete price survey. If you have not done so already, please submit your Price Survey to us no later than October 22, 2014. Your submissions are used to calculate the maximum allowable reimbursements (MAR) for your peer groups.

WIC Changes in the Mirror: How Did We Do?

Please participate in one of our teleconferences (November 4 or 5) to help us understand how changes implemented since October 1, 2013, have affected your experience with WIC.

Last October, the State WIC Program began a transition to the SPIRIT management information system and a new check processing contractor and system. The transition was completed in March 2014.

- How well did the transition work for your store?
- What lessons should the Vendor Management staff learn – how can we make program changes easier, smoother, less disruptive to your business?
- Are there issues or problems with the new systems that you wish us to address?

In March, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, provided the “Final Food Rule” to the state WIC programs. A decade in development, the rule is intended to give participants additional choices of healthy foods and to provide lower fat versions of some foods to help reduce the incidence of obesity and diabetes.

As required by the USDA rule, on October 1, 2014, Alaska reduced the amounts of whole and 2% milk prescribed, increased the amount of 1% or nonfat milk, added whole wheat pasta and canned mackerel to our Approved Food List, developed a substitution table of bananas for specific amounts of infant fruits and vegetables, and approved additional 100% whole wheat breads. In April 2015, some whole and lowfat yogurt will be approved for the Food List.

Some changes announced in the rule were not new to Alaska. For instance, we already allowed nonfat refried beans to be purchased, but we recently approved eight specific brands that may be purchased by our participants.

- How did the rule change affect your store?
- Have you had any feedback from participants about the new foods or the change to lower fat milks?
- What improvements do you suggest for our Approved Food List / Participant ID booklet? We are currently revising it and would appreciate comments about how to make it more helpful. In addition to the teleconferences, we will accept comments by phone, mail, or fax through November 15, 2014.



Alaska's Alternative Cost Containment Project

Federal regulations require the WIC Program, the third largest federal food assistance program, to contain costs through a system of vendor peer groups and maximum allowable reimbursements for WIC food purchases. Since Alaska has geographical and logistic challenges for doing business that are unique among the states, the WIC Program has initiated a study to examine the business environment and develop a more appropriate method to slow the growth of food costs.

The University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Economic Development and Rosewood LLC have begun work on the project, which is funded by a special USDA grant. You may be contacted by the project staff or our office for information about how the current cost containment system affects your operations. Based on information gathered in the coming months, the project will work with State staff to develop an alternative to propose to USDA that will keep costs down with less impact to vendors.

After receiving USDA's approval, we expect to implement any alternative cost containment system with the new vendor agreements for the contract period of October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2018. We look forward to a conversation with you about how we can best provide WIC foods to participants Alaska-style.

The USDA recently released a report titled "Cost Containment in the WIC Program: Peer Groups and Reimbursement Rates" that is available on the agency's website at www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err171.

WIC Vendor Training Available!

We have posted a new WIC Vendor Training PowerPoint on our website at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/vendors/default.aspx>. The training takes about 12 minutes. We will also be very happy to answer questions or follow up with more training via teleconference when it is convenient for you and your staff.



No Rain Checks

Please pay close attention to the following three most common rejection reasons and ask for training from your supervisor if needed. The following numbers are for July, August and September.

275

Missing participant's signature

Please remember that our WIC participants pay with WIC checks and **ALL checks** require a signature to be reimbursable. Depositing a check without a signature is a fatal error and cannot be re-deposited.

154

Missing sale date

Without a sale date we have no way of verifying if a check was used during the valid dates. The check will be rejected unless the store endorses the back with a sale date.

113

Missing vendor stamp

Before depositing your checks flip through them to ensure each has a vendor stamp. The check will be rejected if the vendor stamp box is empty. Also, handwritten vendor numbers will be rejected.

Please call our office at (907) 465-3100 before depositing any questionable checks. If you have rejected checks that you believe should not have been rejected you may submit a WIC Check Appeal Request Form directly to our State Office in Juneau.

WIC Food Changes Take Effect October 1

On March 4, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the "Final Food Rule," a regulation that affects the WIC food items that authorized WIC vendors may or must provide to WIC participants. These changes went into effect October 1, 2014. To summarize these changes, WIC staff published a short insert for clients and vendors alike. **An image of the insert is on the next page.** If you would like more copies please contact us.

WIC Food Changes: Effective October 1, 2014



WHOLE GRAINS

Whole Wheat bread must be 100% whole wheat. These whole wheat breads have been added to the existing allowed food list.

Whole wheat approved pastas must be 100% whole wheat.



Guerrero 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Mission 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Kroger WW Tortillas, 16oz



Carlita 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Ortega 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Safeway "O" Organic WW Pasta, 16oz



Westbrae WW Spaghetti, 16oz



Bella Terra 100% WW pastas, 16oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Hot Dog Buns, 14oz



Kroger 100% WW Hoagie Buns, 14.5oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Hamburger Buns, 14oz



Country Oven 100% WW Hamburger Buns, 24oz



Country Oven 100% WW White, 24oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Tender Bread, 16oz



Save time, money & gas.

Fred Meyer 100% WW Tender Twist, 24oz



Simple Truth Organic WW Pasta, 16oz



Hodgson Mill WW Pastas, 16oz



Racconto 100% WW Pastas, 16oz

CANNED FISH

Atlantic mackerel, Chub Pacific mackerel, or Jack mackerel are allowed. King mackerel is not allowed. **15oz sizes only.**

MILK

WIC checks will specify eligible types of milk

LEGUMES

Refried beans without added sugars, fats (fat free), oils, vegetables, or meats. Please choose low sodium varieties of beans, fruits, and vegetables when available.



Bearitos, 16oz cans



Bush's 16oz cans



Casa Fiesta, 16oz cans



Fred Meyer 16oz cans



Goya 16oz cans



Great Value 16oz cans



La Preferida 16oz cans



Ortega 16oz

INFANT FOODS

Bananas (up to 4) may be substituted for a portion of jarred fruits and vegetables.

Infant Food Quantities	
64 oz Infant fruits and vegetables	
No Bananas 	Sixteen 4 oz jars
	Ten 6 oz jars plus One 4 oz jar
	Sixteen 2 pks (3.5 oz) plus Two 4 oz jars
	AND Fifteen 4 oz jars
	or Ten 6 oz jars
	or Eight 2 pks (3.5 oz) plus One 4 oz jar
	AND Fourteen 4 oz jars
	or Nine 6 oz jars
	or Eight 2 pks (3.5 oz)
	AND Thirteen 4 oz jars
	or Eight 6 oz jars plus one 4 oz jar
	AND Twelve 4 oz jars
	or Eight 6 oz jars
	or Six 2 pks (7 oz)

FOODS NO LONGER ON WIC

Wheat tortillas allowed only if on this list. Please exclude previously authorized WIC wheat tortillas

Health and Social Services

Alaska WIC Program
Div. of Public
Assistance
P.O. Box 110612
Juneau, AK 99811

Phone: 907-465-3100
Fax: 907-465-3416
E-mail:

Vendors!

Please post this newsletter
for your staff to read



Fat-free and/or 1% UHT milk have mostly replaced the required 2% UHT.

Please make sure your store has the required quantities of non-fat and 1% low-fat to meet the minimum stock requirements. A copy of the minimum stock requirements is available on our website or by request.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/vendors/default.aspx>

Contacting the WIC Vendor Unit

The Vendor Unit will provide assistance to vendors at any time. For questions or complaints, please contact us and we will do our best to meet your needs.

Sandy Harbanuk

Vendor Coordinator
Sandra.harbanuk@alaska.gov
907/465-4704

Erin Khmelev

Assistant Vendor Coordinator
Erin.khmelev@alaska.gov
907/465-8630

Kristen Stouder

Assistant Vendor Coordinator
Kristen.stouder@alaska.gov
907/465-6399

IF YOU FIND LOST CHECKS: Please notify your local WIC agency or the State Office immediately at (907) 465-3100 so the checks can be returned to the participant.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested on the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 200250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



2014 Permanent Fund Dividend Chart

PFD Amount	\$1,884.00
Household Size	PFD Amount
1	\$1,884.00
2	\$3,768.00
3	\$5,652.00
4	\$7,536.00
5	\$9,420.00
6	\$11,304.00
7	\$13,188.00
8	\$15,072.00
9	\$16,956.00
10	\$18,840.00
11	\$20,724.00
12	\$22,608.00
13	\$24,492.00
14	\$26,376.00
15	\$28,260.00
16	\$30,144.00
Each Additional Family Member	\$1,884.00