



WIC watch

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Participant-Centered Leadership for WIC Success

This issue tells many WIC stories. As we transformed our program over the past year, many of you have shared examples of WIC success. You told us how the healthy new foods and powerful nutrition messages were reaping immediate benefits in the families and communities we serve.



At this year's Annual Conference, the California WIC community is kicking off **WIC Goes Platinum**, a multi-year effort to bring our frontline services up to a whole new level of excellence. The **Academy for Participant-**

Centered Leadership will support every WIC employee to integrate our Gold-standard foods, our emphasis on staff wellness, and our participant-centered nutrition education and breastfeeding support – into the entire WIC clinic experience.

We hope these stories – and the Conference -- will inspire you to begin the journey. Enjoy!

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Have You Heard the Buzz?

At WIC, we know that helping people stay healthy is the most effective way to cut health care costs. WIC programs have proven that **prevention works**, saving millions in taxpayer dollars by reaching young families with nutritious food and health education at a critical time in their growth and development.

With the success of the food package rollout behind us, we are poised to utilize our most treasured resources – our fantastic staff – to develop innovative ways to serve California's 1.5 million WIC participants, using a participant centered approach. This involves a systems approach to providing WIC services that looks at all aspects of the client's WIC experience and directs service delivery to support healthy eating behaviors. It requires

“In CA, almost all low-income pregnant women enroll in WIC, and close to 60% of all infants born in our state are WIC infants.”

a complete examination of how WIC services are delivered, and a commitment to changing WIC from a “process” oriented program to an “outcome” based program. This exciting approach lays the foundation for **WIC Goes Platinum!**

There are several big and important projects in store for the California WIC Program to help us go Platinum. First, we are expanding

the **Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program** using a generous increase in funding. Many more local WIC agencies will be able to enhance their breastfeeding services with the addition of peer counselors and other breastfeeding support activities. Second, the WIC Division and CWA are partnering to start the **Academy for Participant-Centered Leadership (APL)**. APL will be open to WIC staff working at all levels to build skills and inspire changes to make our WIC offices and services even more responsive to WIC families and more fully focused on our participants. Finally, over the next few years, California WIC will undertake two big information technology projects--replacing ISIS with a new, **state-of-the art computer system** and transitioning to **electronic benefits transfer (EBT)** using cards to provide WIC foods instead of paper checks.

Our economy continues to struggle and this affects our own lives as well as the families that WIC serves. The WIC Division and many of our local agencies are experiencing hardships due to furloughs, budget cuts and hiring freezes and these hardships make it even more challenging to keep up with the growing need for WIC services. We are fortunate, however, that the federal government recognizes the need for WIC services and is providing us with funds to serve California's eligible women, infants and children.

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WIC is Going Platinum!



WIC will play an active role to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015, through breastfeeding promotion and support, quality nutrition services and increased access to healthy foods to communities at the highest risk of obesity.

We will be working hard to strengthen the public health core of the transformative Health Reform bill by partnering with providers to ensure that lactation support and accommodation provisions, and other preventive services, such as screening, counseling, supports that will help patients eat better, move more and breastfeed, are offered in a culturally competent manner. We will be strong partners in the **First Lady's Let's Move** initiative. Our partnership with **UCLA** and **UCB** on **WIC Worksite Wellness** will help us in developing and sustaining a culture of wellness for WIC staff and participants. We will continue to provide valuable resources through **"WIC Can Help"** to strengthen local WIC capacity to connect WIC families with all possible new and existing community assistance programs.

CWA will continue its strong advocacy efforts at the state and federal level to strengthen the breastfeeding "safety net" and help fix breastfeeding-broken hospitals. Our advocacy efforts will be utilized to support and strengthen WIC provisions in Child Nutrition reauthorization and the newly created Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program.

As one of the largest and most visible programs of the California Department of Public Health, WIC has an important role in ensuring that the department's nutrition programs and resources are coordinated and successful in addressing the obesity epidemic and other public health challenges. By actively collaborating with community and health partners to maximize resources, and planning strategically, we can leverage the benefits of the new WIC foods to cultivate a culture of wellness in our workplaces, improve healthy food access in our communities, and transform family health habits for the families we serve – and for the communities they live in.



Join us as we go from Gold.....to Platinum!



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BETTER FOODS

Fresh Potential for Local Foods

The powerful Healthy Habits campaign has resonated so strongly with staff and WIC families because of the expertise, dedication and the collective vision of innovation of the terrific planning team.

A critical component of the HH campaign is experiencing and tasting the healthy new WIC foods – food demos and taste tests allow both staff and participants to try out foods they may not be familiar with, and learn ways to cook them. Front-line WIC staff are eager to share news of the transformations that are happening every day in their sites.

Adele Levy, from the **PHFE WIC** Uptown Whittier site, recounts how one of the participant, **Wendy Miramontes**, told her just the other day that she had never thought about trying brown rice. When she tried it in the class, she liked it so much that she immediately bought some and cooked it for her family, using one of the recipes from the new WIC Cookbook. She bought a rice cooker and now says that brown rice plays a regular part at her families' meals.

Her kids seem to like it much better than the white rice. Adele says, "Not only did we introduce her to brown rice but we taught her how to prepare it so she is able to easily whip up tasty dishes for her family using brown rice."

Brown rice sales at the "WIC" store across from their site have skyrocketed. Adele says, "Clearly our classes on whole grains have had a strong and positive impact on our participants' purchasing and food preparation behavior! I'm wondering if other markets are seeing this same change?"

Fresh Potential for Local Foods

One of the most exciting changes is the inclusion of fruits and vegetables in the new food checks. California produces more than half the nation's fresh fruits and is the leading producer of fresh vegetables. In order to increase participants' access to fresh produce and support local farmers, CA State WIC is authorizing farmers' markets as a new category of vendor approved to accept WIC fruit and vegetable checks (FVC). An initial group of certified farmers' markets has been selected to help develop effective cashing and check processing guidelines based on WIC and banking requirements that will be used statewide. This effort will help develop the training and infrastructure needed to expand to all eligible farmers in the State.

May 17, 2010 is the "go live" date for the initial group of farmers'

The Farmers Market banner



markets. In 2010 and 2011, State WIC will be accepting new farmer and market manager applications and building capacity to train and authorize farmers and market managers.

The following farmers' markets were selected to participate in the first phase to accept FVC:

- **Concord Farmers' Market (San Francisco Bay Area)**
- **City Heights Certified Farmers' Market (San Diego)**
- **Tulare County Certified Farmers' Market (Visalia)**
- **Alisal Community Farmers' Market (Salinas)**
- **Central Avenue Farmers' Market (Los Angeles)**
- **Fountains Certified Farmers' Market (Roseville)**

Beverly Clark, Director of Contra Costa County WIC, says, "We are excited to offer our clients the opportunity for year-round WIC benefits at the Concord Farmers Market. The Pacific Coast Farmers Market has a shift that does fun, healthy food demos in our WIC classroom. It is such a synergistic collaboration – WIC families are eating healthier and we get to support local farmers."

“May 17, 2010 is the 'go live' date for the Farmers' Market Pilot.”



Cook-Off Spurs Enthusiasm

Planned Parenthood of Orange County WIC Program celebrated National Nutrition Month in March by organizing a WIC cook-off as a collaborative team building exercise between WIC and the Health Education departments. These two departments make up the Community Education and Outreach department of Planned Parenthood.

Seven teams of 5 or 6 members each participated in this fun event. The teams adopted creative names such as **Rainbow Chefs of Jamaica, Food Nuts** and **Heaven's Kitchen**. In true cook-off style, each team had 30 minutes to develop a recipe and develop a marketing presentation that incorporated the **Healthy Habits for Life** messaging for their recipe. The Rainbow Chefs of Jamaica team developed their recipe with WIC children in mind. They sang a rap-like song that children would enjoy.

Teams were required to incorporate 6 WIC food items: Mozzarella string cheese, whole wheat tortillas, peanut butter, mango, Italian pars-

ley, and red pepper. All the foods except peanut butter were new to the WIC food package, and had the potential to add fabulous nutrition, color and texture to the dishes.

Irene Salazar, Planned Parenthood Vice President of Community Education and Outreach and **Sherry Norwood, RD WIC Nutrition Education and Training Manager** developed creative guidelines and judging criteria for the cook-off. Fun costumes, hats and noise makers added to the carnival atmosphere.

The teams were provided with safe tools, food safety rules, plastic gloves, plastic utensils, and a food peeler, for preparation. A table with more technical equipment (sharp



To make staff wellness a work place priority, it is critical to get support from Senior Management.

knives, mini-food-processor with operational assistance from an expert) was made available along with certain spices and extra ingredients to enhance recipes. The only cooking equipment that the teams had was a microwave.

Senior management members from the parent agency participated as judges and moderator. The room was filled with laughter and everyone had a great time.

They learned how easy it was to fix healthy meals in a hurry.

Planned Parenthood WIC organized a creative event that helped staff from the two departments bond and work together, and demonstrated their commitment for a healthier workplace and community.

For more details, please contact Sherry Norwood at snorwood@PPOSBC.org.



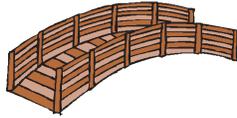
The PPOSBC WIC program has used the rollout of the new WIC foods as an opportunity to improve the nutrition environment in their organization. The team regularly organizes activities to help promote healthy eating behaviors among staff.



The Cook-Off got everyone's creative juices flowing.

Building Bridges Between

When the WIC Local Vendor Liaison (LVL) Program was started last year, **Janelle Webb** from from **Clinica**



Sierra Vista WIC, could not have guessed the many responsibilities her newly minted position would entail. She waded into completely new waters during the first months, seeing the WIC program from the grocers' point of view.

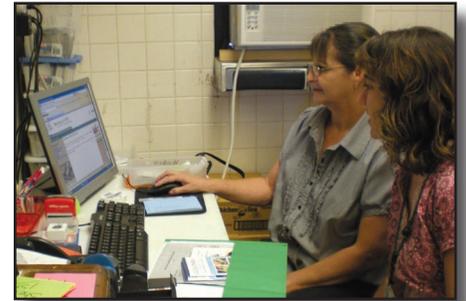
"The liaison position is truly unique in the WIC universe," says Janelle. "The LVL has the freedom to go into the WIC authorized vendor environment, whether it is the A-50 store, the neighborhood or independent store, or the chain store, and spend time cultivating a personal interaction with the owner or manager, building trust, and assisting them in understanding and successfully implementing the new WIC food package. Frequently vendors will call the LVLs to clarify information received from the State or to ask for materials such as posters or shopping guides."

Before the LVL program was launched, WIC participants sometimes experienced frustration trying to find a product in the grocery store. Store clerks were not always helpful, and the WIC staff did not understand vendor operations enough to be able to assist her find

the item she needed at the local store. Store managers were confused by irate WIC participants demanding products that they did not know to stock and offer. Calling the state WIC office to lodge a complaint seemed such a big deal, that it was used for more serious incidents. This caused many problems to fester without resolutions.

It's a completely different story now, according to Janelle. "My favorite call was from a senior manager from a local Albertsons. He had told one of our participants that she was unable to get a certain cheese because it was not a WIC-eligible cheese, but he called me to make sure he had given her the right information. He didn't want to anger one of his customers unnecessarily if he was incorrect! The LVL often help smooth vendor-participant transactions."

Magdalia, a busy mom, was becoming very frustrated trying to find Stage 3 baby foods in WIC-eligible containers. None of the stores she visited seemed to have them. She called the Clinica Sierra Vista WIC call center, and was promptly transferred to speak with an LVL. The LVL was able to inform her that baby food manufacturers do not make Stage 3 baby foods in 3.5 or 4 oz containers. She suggested



LVLs help assist vendors on food package and customer service issues. Janelle helps a vendor with minimum stocking requirement details.

that Magdalia use the smaller WIC authorized baby foods mixed with table foods, such as baby food carrots with spaghetti sauce, or baby food pears with oatmeal. This factual information from somebody "in the know" calmed Magdalia and saved her time in the grocery store aisles.

In the year leading up to the roll-out of the new food package, most vendors were excited about offering fruits and vegetables. Their customers had already begun to ask for fruits and vegetables to pay for with their cash, and having WIC coupons available to pay for these would increase the demand, they knew. The few vendors who did not already offer fruits and vegetables were willing to give it a try. Once the new foods were launched, the item most difficult for participants to find in the stores was whole grains in

"The LVL Program fills a critical communication gap between local grocers and local WIC programs to help prevent needless confusion and frustration among participants and grocers."

WIC and Vendors

the WIC allowable size (16 oz). The LVLs were instrumental in helping many of the smaller vendors, such as the neighborhood stores, identify which whole grains were satisfactory for the stocking requirement as well as preferred by their WIC clientele. For example, based on WIC participant request, many neighborhood stores in one area of town began carrying whole wheat tortillas in the 16 oz size.

The WIC Local Vendor Liaison (LVL) Program is an exciting innovation that successfully streamlined the implementation of the new WIC

food packages. The LVL Program fills a critical communication gap between local grocers and local WIC programs to help prevent needless confusion and frustration among participants and grocers, improve community relations, and raise the profile of the WIC program as a whole with its key business partners—local grocers. And best of all, the strong partnership built between WIC agencies and vendors has helped make the shopping experience for WIC families a happier one.



Nora Garza works with the vendor, familiarizing her with the new foods. Providing Vendors with extra shopping guides and colorful HH materials helps market the new healthier WIC to the community.

WIC-friendly recipe website

eat better early.com



- ➔ Delicious, Easy WIC-friendly Recipes
- ➔ Nutrition & Cooking Tips
- ➔ Spanish or English

Each recipe calls for at least one WIC-eligible food

Breakfast Lunch Dinner Snacks Desserts



The entire website will be available in either Spanish or English



CLEAR MESSAGES

Linking Great Education

The statewide **Healthy Habits** campaign last year inspired WIC staff to work together: adopting healthier eating and exercise habits at work; supporting each other in their busy clinics; and having fun teaching WIC families key health messages using Sesame characters in lively and interactive sessions. Riding the wave of success from 2009, the Healthy Habits Every Day 2010 topics serve to reinforce the “Grade A, USDA Prime” nutrition education and excitement that the new WIC food packages have generated!

Where **Healthy Habits Every Day** (HHED 2009) promoted why the new WIC foods were healthy choices for participants to make, HH 2010, encourages participants to try new WIC foods that they have seldom or never eaten, and shows them how to do it with cooking demonstrations and tasting. **Delfina Shelomenseff, the Coordinator of the HH Campaign Planning Team** says, “When all agencies are educating the same message at the same time, participant behavior can be noticeable. WIC stores in both northern and southern California reported running out of lowfat milk during the **Lose the Fat, Keep the Vitamins – Drink Lowfat Milk!** portion of the 2009 HHED campaign. The NEFPI study confirmed that 74% of those participants who tasted lowfat milk at a WIC agency switched to lowfat milk. This validated our decision to encourage local agencies to include tasting as part of the HH2010 classes.”

Staff feedback has been critical in shaping the direction on the campaign. **NEVHC WIC**, represented on the planning team by **Joy Ahrens**, has been pivotal in developing the WIC Cookbooks. **Valerie Miller, from SDSU WIC**, a member of the HH Planning team, shared their success that SDSU WIC had with food demos. SDSU WIC staff were willing to create a DVD with the State’s technical expertise, that would be developed for large scale distribution for WIC families. The DVDs show six healthy recipes that can be cooked using simple tools and basic cooking equipment.

Positive Feedback from the Field:

- Staff like the materials, the professional quality and topics. The DVD with 6 food demos of healthy recipes and cookbooks are a huge hit with staff and participants alike. Participants are thrilled to receive the glossy cookbook. Some are even shocked that they get to take it home! Many participants are asking for extra copies of the DVD to share with family and friends. Joy and her colleagues get calls every week from parents asking how they can get copies for their MD office or school or program. Parents are happy that we are trying to teach them how to cook healthier. Staff are surprised at how interested WIC participants are in the food demo classes.
- Although during the group classes, there is time to show only one recipe from the DVD, many participants are willing to stay in class longer, asking to see all six. Sometimes the teacher has to “kick them out” because they have another class starting! One father, after watching the cooking DVD, begged to staff to let him return with his laptop so that he could burn a copy of the video.
- When parents discover that the 2010 cookbook is the third cookbook developed by NEVHC WIC, they beg for copies of the first two so that they can have the complete collection!
- PHFE and Santa Barbara County WIC have done staff potlucks where everyone brings a dish that is from the cookbook. Staff report that participants ask a lot more questions with the cooking with whole grains class. They are happy that they are learning to cook healthier, and are interested in cooking with whole grains.

“Early results of an evaluation of the campaign show that WIC families remember the campaign messages and they are making changes to eat more of the healthy WIC foods.”

to Hands-On Practice

Joys says, "I am thrilled that NEVHC, SDSU and the State office were able to work together to get the cooking DVDS and cookbooks to all the agencies. We have been able to impact a lot of families, and I know that the smaller agencies have benefited the most because they have the fewest resources. And, as long as both NEVHC and SDSU continue to receive funding for their projects there will be more to come. And hopefully the State can continue to provide DVDs/ Cookbooks to other local agencies!!!"

There is much more healthy cooking in the offing: NEVHC applied for one-time funds to develop their fourth cookbook which will be cooking with kids, and SDSU is using one-time funds to develop their third and fourth cooking DVDs.

When we combine healthy foods with clear and coordinated messages, we are bound to achieve healthy outcomes.



The HH campaign has truly raised the bar for WIC nutrition education. The collaborative process between the State and Local Agencies brings in the strengths from both sides - Local Agencies are able to provide meaningful input and field test materials and lesson plans. The State's leadership and coordination of the campaign, and their resources help create superior educational materials. It is a win-win situation.



The WIC Cookbook is inspiring WIC families and staff to make delicious and healthy meals.

**Welch's is proud to be
a Gold Sponsor of the
California WIC Association's
2010 Annual Conference.**

Change is Here! WIC's

One of the most exciting changes in the WIC food package revolves around breastfeeding and infant feeding. Adopting guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics helps WIC lay a strong emphasis on breastfeeding as the normal way to feed babies.

WIC staffers spend considerable time promoting and encouraging breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding with a focus on the needs and challenges of low-income mothers. The new food packages provide incentives for breastfeeding by adding variety and value.

Delta Health Care WIC staff share their experiences with breastfeeding success:

Camille says that she often hears WIC moms say that the only foods their families have for the month are the ones they buy on

their WIC checks. The enhanced packages for breastfeeding moms with greater amounts of fruits and vegetables are welcomed by families struggling to make ends meet. The biggest thrill Camille gets is when moms tell her that when they joined WIC, they were certain that they would not breastfeed or had planned to combo feed, but after participating in Camille's group classes during their pregnancies, they changed their minds, and are now successfully breastfeeding their babies. Camille is able to be such an effective communicator because she herself is a mom breastfeeding her 9 month old son. Camille says that she was not sure how she would be able to manage breastfeeding exclusively when she returned back to work three and a half months after her baby was born. "My WIC family has been so

“The moms unanimously agree that the constant encouragement from the staff and Breastfeeding Mom support group members help them enormously to continue breastfeeding their babies.”

incredibly supportive of my wishes to exclusively breastfeed Jesus. They constantly ask about my baby, and are glad to see me take breaks to pump my milk. Our clinic is set up with a private, comfy place to pump, a refrigerator to store my milk, making it easy for me to continue fully breastfeeding my son.”

Sharon says their Breastfeeding Support Group for African American moms has fostered kinship and support. The moms unanimously agree that the constant encouragement from the staff and Breastfeeding Mom support group members help them enormously to continue breastfeeding their babies.

Maria shares the story of **Alyssa**, a young mom who called her to tell her that she had resumed exclusively breastfeeding her 10 month old. She had quit a couple months ago, and although Maria had tried to encourage her to continue, Alyssa started giving Jordan formula. However, recently Jordan fell sick, and Alyssa's mom told her to try to breastfeed as Jordan would not eat or drink anything. Well, it worked!



CA WIC is working with multiple partners to improve breastfeeding rates among low-income women in California. Our goals are to increase initiation and duration of breastfeeding, particularly exclusive breastfeeding, as well as promote greater acceptance of breastfeeding as the accepted norm.

Important Role in the Early Years

Alyssa was so thrilled, she came in to return her formula vouchers and is now exclusively breastfeeding (and totally converted!)

A couple, **Abdul** and **Saira**, came to the clinic with their newborn. While the mom sat silently, Dad did all the talking. When **Veronica** asked them how their son Jamal was doing, Abdul said Jamal was being given formula in addition to breastmilk. Dad said the baby cried and did not seem full after Saira breastfed him, so they gave him a couple ounces of formula after every feed. Veronica wanted to know more, and gently probed further. Finally, the Dad said they were worried that Jamal would get so dependant on the breast that he would refuse the bottle – that is what had happened to their older son. Veronica proudly showed them the picture of her 10-month daughter, Victoria, and told them, “I work here full time, leaving my baby for 10 hours every day. Victoria drinks only breastmilk from a bottle. Did you know that we would be happy to give you a pump after you have had a chance to establish your milk supply this month? Saira, who had been quiet the whole time, now spoke up in a firm voice, “I am going to stop giving formula to my baby right now. I breastfed my other babies, and I know that I can breastfeed Jamal to his satisfaction. I am so glad you told me that I can do it again. I feel confident now.”

By providing lactation accommodation to their own staff, Delta Health Care creates a supportive culture where breastfeeding is the norm.



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HEALTHY OUTCOMES

Impact of Nutrition Education

Frontline WIC employees are trained to educate WIC families on healthy eating through individual and group education, peer support groups, and culturally sensitive materials.

The Food Package changes gave us the opportunity to find out if our efforts improve nutrition knowledge, skills and attitudes among the families we serve? And most importantly, does WIC nutrition education in itself support positive behavior change, or are the healthy foods that WIC provides responsible for this change?

As mentioned in the last issue of WIC Watch, a rigorous evaluation plan was designed and conducted by a collaborative research team from UC Berkeley's Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Center for Weight and Health, the state WIC Program and the PHFE-WIC Program.

The study collected baseline data (T1) to see how participants were doing before they received the Healthy Habits nutrition education and food checks, evaluate changes after participants experienced the



Nutrition Education is the cornerstone of the WIC Program. It distinguishes WIC from other nutrition assistance programs, and firmly establishes it as a premier public health program. Every dollar spent on pregnant women in WIC produces up to \$4.21 in Medicaid savings for newborns and their mothers.

nutrition education campaign (T2), and after they received the new food checks (T3).

WIC Nutrition Education Worked!

We are excited to share the early outcomes, now in press in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

The study shows that participants not only recognized the key messages from the nutrition education classes, such as, **Eat a rainbow of different-colored fruits and vegetables, Eat more "anytime" foods and fewer "sometimes" foods, Eat more whole grains, Lose the fat, keep the vitamins - drink lower-fat milk**, their families were actually buying and eating more fruits, whole grains and lower-fat milk.

Since these changes in behavior occurred even before WIC started providing many of the healthier food choices, the results show that WIC families were eager to try out the new WIC foods they learned about through nutrition education.

The T3 phase to evaluate the additional impact of the new WIC foods has just wrapped up. We look forward to sharing the results with you in the next issue.

One of the most exciting findings is that the state-wide implementation of not routinely issuing formula in the first month has led to significantly increased breastfeeding rates among WIC moms since October 1, and these rates are continuing to hold steady.

Results showed WIC families actually implemented what they learned through Nutrition Education.

For more information, please contact Shannon E. Whaley, PHFE WIC at Shannon@phfewic.org, Nancy Crocker, State WIC at Nancy.Crocker@cdph.ca.gov, or Judy Gomez, PHFE WIC, at Judy@phfewic.org.



Get Inspired! "The Biggest Winner!"

The **City of Berkeley WIC program** has launched an exciting plan for worksite wellness. They hope this will encourage staff to adopt and practice healthy behavior changes in their efforts to achieve overall wellness – specifically physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.



Benchmarks for Change

- Staff will earn "Wellness Points" for each action they adopt and practice. Every staff member who participates in this campaign will be a winner! On a monthly basis, staff will receive a small incentive for the progress they have made with healthy behavior changes.
- At the three/six/nine months benchmarks– those who have made the biggest progress will get a bigger incentive.
- After a year – there is a grand prize for the staff person with the overall highest amount of points.
- "Wellness Points" are given to staff based on their adoption of and progress with healthy behavior changes (i.e. the adoption and active practice of emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, and financial wellness activities.) These points are given by the WIC Worksite Wellness coordinator or WIC Worksite Wellness Champion.



Suggestions for markers in behavior changes in the following areas:



- Practicing meditation;
- Providing social support to fellow staff in their wellness efforts;
- Utilizing services such as EAP;
- Eating more healthy food options;
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks;
- Arranging and participating in walking activities;
- Leading stretch breaks;
- Contributing to the "Super Food" basket and other healthy eating activities, such as bringing healthy food options to staff meetings, participating in the salad luncheon - in which staff is encouraged to bring an item that can be sampled and added to the selections;
- Conducting a healthy cooking demo for fellow staff;
- Actively practicing actions associated with personal development in-services (i.e. information learned from financial wellness workshops, understanding your benefits, understanding your rights within the workplace, etc.);
- Sharing meditation and physical activity resources with fellow staff (i.e. information on lectures, trainings, books, DVDs, classes, etc.);
- Knowing your numbers and monitoring them on a routine basis (i.e. blood pressure, cholesterol level, blood glucose, hematocrit, etc.)

Additional wellness markers or amendments to this list may occur during the implementation of this activity.

"The Biggest Winner!" Point System

Points are based on a scale of 1-5:

1-2 points given to staff that participate in activities (such as participating in stretch breaks, bringing healthy food options to staff meetings, etc.).

2-3 points for being consistent with behavior change practices (such as taking regular walking breaks, having your numbers checked on a routine basis and knowing what they are, etc.).

4-5 points for taking the lead on developing and implementing wellness activities (such as leading a stretch break, leading a presentation or talk on wellness related item, etc.).

Congratulations, Berkeley WIC, for your commitment to a healthy work place! For details, please contact Katherine Brown at KBrown@ci.berkeley.ca.us.



The Berkeley WIC team is harnessing WIC's role as a critical player in health promotion, by prioritizing employees' physical, mental, emotional well-being, and personal and professional productivity.

The Last Word: My WIC Story

by Tina Lavy, MS, IBCLC
Yuba County WIC (1995-2000)
Sutter County WIC (2000-2010)

Many years ago, a young mom walked into the Sutter County WIC office. She had a two year old little boy and was pregnant with her second baby. She and her husband lived on a farm in central California where he was a ranch foreman. She was attending school and helping part-time at a local day care. They had a baby girl in December 1990 – one of the coldest days on record in the usually sunny and warm mid-valley. The mom continued going to her appointments with her two young children, attending WIC classes, going to school and working part-time.

That young mother was me.

Can you believe that little boy is now 22 years old and is getting ready to graduate as a 2nd Lieutenant from the Air Force Academy? And the little girl is at UCSC majoring in Psychology?

My story began nearly 20 years ago – we were not poor, but farm wages didn't really pay that much – and we had no health insurance. WIC was there for me when we needed it most.

“We were not poor, but farm wages didn't really pay that much – and we had no health insurance. WIC was there for me when we needed it most.”

I went to my WIC appointments and sat in the classes. I did not always follow the advice, but the staff I met during my appointments at WIC made such an impression on me that I will never forget them; **Nancy Link**, an RD and **Kathy Ang**, RD, IBCLC, and a breastfeeding mother herself, were two wonderful role models who embraced the WIC program in its early years. **Susan Garcia**, Yuba County WIC Program Director – who hired me as a Nutrition Assistant in the 1990's after I completed my Master's Degree and who really wanted a full-time staff person, but allowed me to work part-time and the hours I requested so I could take my kids to school and pick them up. The WIC staff I have met over the years – **Kulwant, Ya, Balbir** – they always asked about my kids, who are (as I now tell moms) my “WIC graduates”.

I think back about the hundreds of mothers who participated in my breastfeeding classes. One time, one of them stopped me in the grocery store - she recognized me from WIC- saying: “I remember when you helped me breastfeed my first baby.” I asked her, “So how old is your child now?” and was amazed when she said he was 10 years old.

I had wanted so badly become an RD – but raising my children was more important than relocating to another part of the state where RD internships were available. Then, I heard about Lactation Consultant training with Gini Baker that State WIC was organizing. I did not know

“You are so smart – it must be all that breastmilk you drank, and the great education and support I got at WIC.”

if such an opportunity would be available to me again, so I jumped at the chance to enroll for this training. WIC would pay the nearly \$5000 it took for me to attend the 9 month session of classes and sit for the exam. I juggled my son's football games and the LC trainings on Friday nights. I still remember my tears of joy and relief the day I found out that I had passed the exam. Writing “IBCLC” next to my name was a dream come true and to this day I am very proud of that privilege, which would not have been possible without the help of the California WIC Program.

At that time I was the only practicing IBCLC in a county of nearly 100,000, and still continue to be. I was doing what I loved most – helping moms succeed at breastfeeding. Seventeen years later, I am still at WIC – proudly placing the photos of my children on my desk. Anthony, who was the little two year old, will be married in June, and my curly haired daughter, Danielle, is a freshman away at college. I always tell them, “You are so smart – it must be all that breastmilk you drank, and the great education and support I got at WIC.”

TECHNOLOGY

WIC Tech Goes Platinum!



The new video conferencing capability will allow local WIC Agencies to participate in quality trainings without having to incur travel costs to Sacramento. The TSS team (inset) will take WIC's training capabilities to the next level.

The WIC Program will take a giant leap into the future with the launching of the latest in video conferencing (VC) technology. State WIC will provide funding for the one time purchase of video conferencing equipment for a single local agency location. The goal of the project is to provide video conferencing capability between WIC Sacramento Headquarters, WIC regional training locations and every local agency.

This remarkable technology will provide state WIC, WIC training sites and every local agency with the capability to communicate more economically. Costly trips to Sacramento for training and meetings will be significantly reduced. Training will be much more easily accessible and affordable for local agencies.

By now you should have been contacted by a State VC analyst and received the CA-WIC-VC Local Agency Information Sheet. This is a sight survey form to

TSS Help Desk hours are now Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM and Saturday, 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

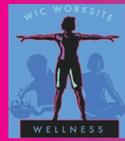
assist with the identification of VC equipment that will be purchased. Soon you will be sent the LAVC Brochure. This brochure is designed to show you some sample package levels to be used as templates for different sizes of VC installations. You and your IT staff can use these documents to identify your hardware needs, requirements, and device quantities.

Once you have identified the type and quantity of equipment you wish to purchase, you will need to identify vendors to obtain price quotes. E-mail or fax your quotes to your VC Analyst.

There will be various VC vendors who will be displaying their equipment at the upcoming WIC CWA Conference in early May in San Diego... There will be two demonstrations on Tuesday, May 4th. The times will be listed in your CWA packet. This will be a good opportunity for you to review some of the equipment available to assess the capabilities and to help you decide what package you might consider purchasing for your agency.

If you have any questions about the information above or need to identify your VC Analyst, please contact Peter Maloney at (916) 928-8708 or e-mail peter.maloney@cdph.ca.gov.

“The WIC Program will take a giant leap into the future with the launching of the latest in video conferencing technology.”



WORKSITE WELLNESS

Join the Wellness Movement

CWA is thrilled to announce the first cohort of certified Well WIC Worksites. Five Local WIC Agencies have demonstrated sustained commitment to employee wellness by allocating staff, resources and time to developing and maintaining health-supporting work environments, while operating outstanding WIC programs.

The five Well WIC Worksites are:

1. **Tulare County HHS WIC Program, Visalia – certified April 15, 2010**
2. **Clinica Sierra Vista WIC Program, Bakersfield – certified April 15, 2010**
3. **CRP WIC Program, Sacramento – certified April 21, 2010**
4. **Monterey County WIC Program, Monterey – certified May 3, 2010**
5. **PHFE WIC Program, Los Angeles – certified May 3, 2010**

The multi-layered WIC Worksite Wellness program champions the best practices in primary prevention, and promotes WIC's leadership to actively collaborate with stakeholders and align resources



CSV WIC has translated its vision of a health-promoting culture by creating a HH4L (Healthy Habits for Life) team to coordinate and sustain their extraordinary staff wellness activities.

for a shared response to the pandemic of chronic disease. The key components of the WWC program, translated into health promotion practices and organizational policies, constitute the 10-Steps to a Well WIC

Worksite: Healthy foods; physical activity; general health; emotional and mental health support; lactation accommodation; community capacity building; senior-level support; designated Wellness Coordinator; communication and promotion; and evaluation.

The goal of the WIC Worksite Wellness program is to create conditions that inspire employees to make good use of the wellness opportunities in the work place and to seek wellness in their own lives.

And each of the Well WIC Worksites exemplify this – staff members are role models, there is a strong culture of peer support, a designated wellness coordinator and a wellness committee that coordinates and sustains their efforts.



Tulare County WIC demonstrates that it is possible to provide outstanding WIC services to participants as well as devote resources and time to the health and well-being of staff.

“Workplace wellness improves morale and productivity.”

Their policies and practices have proved that they are cutting-edge public health programs that truly walk their talk.

A visiting team with members from State WIC, California WIC Association and the WIC Worksite Advisory Committee visited the Agencies to celebrate this momentous achievement with the deserving staff. The certification team congratulated staff for their sustained efforts to maintain a work place culture where wellness is the norm. Each of these agencies will be honored at the Opening plenary of the CWA Annual Conference.

Congratulations on being the first WIC programs in the state of California and in the nation to become certified Well WIC Worksites!

– Walk the Talk!

What's Next?

We will continue our partnership with UCLA and UC Berkeley to engage and train WIC staff to disseminate and advocate for widespread improvements in nutrition and physical activity behaviors in their local agencies and help spark advocacy to influence such policies and regulations at the local level.

In April, CWA launched a monthly **WIC Worksite Newsletter**, created specially for WIC by UC Berkeley's Center for Weight and Health. Each month, you will receive a newsletter highlighting current research developments around worksite wellness, strategies for improving your health while at work and answers to your pressing questions regarding implementation of worksite wellness at local agen-

“Staff wellness will be in the forefront of our prevention efforts.”

cies. In addition, Dr. Pat Crawford's team will be providing technical assistance to you to strengthen your worksite wellness plans by helping identify realistic and implementable steps.

UCB will also be conducting the evaluations of our wellness efforts. The purpose of evaluations is to demonstrate effectiveness – health outcomes, lowered health care costs, increased morale, productivity. Evaluations are practical tools to systematically improve and account for our wellness efforts.



CRP WIC has been a trail blazer in adopting forward-thinking policies on staff wellness and has engaged their public health and community partners in their wellness activities.

“When wellness becomes the office culture, the benefits are life-long.”

Upcoming WWC Webinars

- **Dr. Antronette Yancey (UCLA)** will discuss the best ways to implement the **Lift Off** program with WIC Directors and Wellness Coordinators. Many Directors support the idea of encouraging physical activity for staff, but may not realize that that committing to the 10-minute a day **Lift Off** program is not as time-intensive as they are assuming. HR concerns may also be the reason they are hesitating to adopt this program. These issues will be addressed by Dr. Yancey and her team.



Dr. Antronette Yancey

- Introduce Local Agencies to a Sponsorship toolkit to help agencies solicit local support from participating business that will help fund incentive awards and build community partnerships.
- Media tools and tips designed to help the agencies publicize success and sustain the program over the long term.
- We will apply the lessons learned by certified Well WIC Local Agencies in developing environment level policies and practices

Watch the Flash for Webinar dates.

continued next page →

Think Local,

Continued from page 17

Together change happens. Get Involved!

You are the heart and soul of the WIC program, dedicated to helping others live healthier lives. You are the reason why CA WIC is able to successfully serve 1.5 million women, infants and children each month.

You are the reason WIC changes lives!

We need your expertise and wisdom in making California healthier, one community at a time. Your WIC agency is a microcosm of the community you live and work in. Use your expertise and skills to make sure that your community is on a path to good health.



Monterey County WIC has a workplace wellness program to be proud of, with creative collaborations with county partners. Physical activity sessions at staff meetings get hearts pumping and brains charging, and peer support helps staff keep their wellness goals on track.

How Can You Do This?

Each one of you is a Wellness Champion. Spread the word!

Think Local

- ✓ encourage friends and family
- ✓ become an active partner in health promotion efforts of local community groups
- ✓ speak at your schools PTA to share your success with wellness and encourage them to adopt wellness policies
- ✓ educate employers about the CA law to allow breastfeeding moms to pump at work, support your co-workers to maintain a healthier life
- ✓ join local coalitions to help implement strategies, and advocate for a healthier nutrition and physical activity environment at workplaces, at schools
- ✓ Tweet it: post recommendations for improving health in the workplace to your Twitter account.
- ✓ Share what WIC is doing with worksite wellness with your Facebook friends
- ✓ Link folks to the WIC Worksite Wellness website: <http://www.calwic.org/worksitewellness/index.html>
- ✓ **Participate in one or more events happening in your community over the summer**
- ✓ **Have fun with wellness this summer!**
- ✓ **Keep CWA posted of your successes and challenges, so we can support you on this exciting journey.**

You can make a difference! Please join our movement to share resources, and partner with local communities, businesses and government for a healthy and fit California.

“Our wellness priority will include employees’ personal and professional productivity, and physical, mental and emotional well-being.”

Act Global

Act Global

- ✓ **The first National Physical Activity Plan** for the U.S. will kick off in Washington, D.C. on May 3, bringing together many collaborators from the First Lady's obesity initiative, Let's Move. Dr. Toni Yancey, WIC Wellness Champion and leader of Lift Off has been appointed to the Board of Partnership for a Healthier America, a coalition working with the White House to link and mobilize the private sector to curb childhood obesity within a generation. We can join forces with local partners in adopting the PA plan in our communities. Dr. Yancey will share action plans with us.
- ✓ **Transformative Health Care Bill:** This huge bill is chock-full of support and funding to strengthen core public health functions, and encourage public health coordination and prevention research. The Prevention and Public Health Council fund will support "Community Transformation" grants to states, to support interventions that promote healthy environments and behaviors by making it easier for people to make healthy choices. Our communities could be candidates for healthy transformation.
- ✓ **Wonderful WIC Provisions in CNR:** The Senate Committee Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill is full of great news for WIC, making substantive reforms and providing funding to protect the quality and integrity of our healthy new food packages; increase the pace of WIC modernization efforts; make breastfeeding a core function and focus of the program; and strengthen our ability to research, document and work towards measurable health improvements to fight hunger and prevent obesity.
- ✓ **Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation:** In this report by the Surgeon General, Regina Benjamin, everyone is asked to join the national grassroots effort to reverse the trend of obesity and accompanying chronic diseases.



PHFE has been among the first WIC programs to establish a comprehensive wellness program. Their Health is Wealth program served as one of the models for developing the statewide WIC Worksite Wellness initiative. Staff are inspired to make use of the many wellness opportunities that are offered to them.

CWA will assist local agencies devise steps to build a healthier California by fostering and sustaining long-term and collaborative efforts throughout the county through improved partnerships between WIC, public health, child care, social service and community organizations. We will educate providers, partners and the community on the lactation support and accommodation provisions of the health care bill, and other supports that will help patients eat better, move more.

We can all be important players in the movement to improve the health of our state, one community at a time. We know that you will be our partners in this exciting future. Your participation in this movement will cause positive ripple effects that will be felt by the millions of families we serve, and the communities we live, work and play in.



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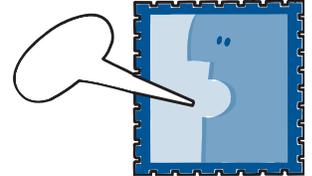
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You have a story to tell!
You have a program to showcase!
Contribute to the WIC Watch!



Upcoming Newsletters are already being planned
around the following themes:

ISSUE	THEME	DEADLINE
Summer 2010	Breastfeeding	June 15, 2010

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Want to be added
to the Flash e-mail?

New e-mail
address?

Need more
newsletters?



Save the Date

CWA FALL CONFERENCE

September 20, 2010

Town & Country Resort
& Convention Center
San Diego, CA



USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack visited an East Los Angeles Community Center to participate in a community forum on Child Nutrition Reauthorization. He discussed the President and the First Lady's efforts to provide access to healthy and affordable food for all American children as part of the Let's Move initiative. WIC uber Ambassadors, Shelly Lewis, Jennifer Jeffries and Pina Hernandez, from PHFE met with Secretary Vilsack to convey WIC priorities for CNR.