Holding on to Hope

As we send this to the printer, there is still no resolution to a prolonged federal government shutdown that threatens the California WIC program’s ability to serve participants beyond the end of October. The specter of closing WIC’s doors to millions of families has shaken stakeholders’ confidence in the program all over the country.

Just as WIC is about to celebrate 40 years of success, the current crisis tempts both fear and despair. But that’s when WIC leaders need to hold out, and deliberately cultivate, hope. Hope comes into play when our circumstances are dire and the way forward is not clear. It is a confident feeling that what is wanted can be had, or that events will turn out for the best.

We can hold our heads high and stay proud of the stellar services we provide California’s young low-income families. With your help, CWA is waging a campaign to TURN UP THE HEAT on Congress, and we are confident that they will eventually listen and respond. CWA will work with the leadership at California Department of Public Health to address program changes in order that together we can accomplish our common goal of a healthy California. We must remain hopeful and fight on!

We’ll never give up – Hope in the future!
Reaching for Results: Outcomes-Based WIC Management

California WIC Association Fall Management Conference
October 22-23, 2013 ◆ Sacramento, CA

What’s always at center stage in WIC? Meaningful outcomes for women, children, and families, of course! Welcome to those attending CWA’s 2013 Fall Management Conference. This year’s Conference is designed to help managers address challenges and seize opportunities with the right information, skills and practical tools for ensuring positive health outcomes.

For those of you staying to keep things humming in your local WIC agencies, THANK YOU! Be sure to ask your colleagues to share with you what they’ve learned at conference, and CWA will strive to continue providing timely and relevant information through all our regular channels: our biweekly e-newsletter, the CWA Flash, our What’s New? blog, Facebook, Twitter, and past issues of the WIC Watch magazine. You’ll find them all at www.calwic.org!

At the Conference on Tuesday, CWA President Marcia Barnes and Executive Director Laurie True will open with a welcome to all. We'll spend the morning with Brent Walker of the Altarum Institute (and a former California WIC guru!), who will showcase the new WIC Services Toolkit, providing management tools and resources specifically for use in local agencies.

At lunch, WIC Worksite Wellness Coordinators will gather for some idea-sharing. Then we’ll spend a stimulating afternoon with expert trainer Sarita Maybin, returning from a successful session at CWA’s Spring Conference in San Jose. Sarita will present Supervise for Success, a multi-level, interactive training featuring practical tools and skills for developing expectations, establishing loyal and passionate teams, and much more!

On Wednesday, after celebrating with some awards, we’ll hear from State WIC staff about the Academy for Participant-centered Learning (APL): Platinum WIC in Action. Then, Martha Dominguez and Suzanne Haydu, from Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health at CDPH, will join us for a panel on how WIC and MCAH can collaborate towards common goals and outcomes.

CWA will provide State and Federal Policy Updates, with breaking WIC budget and legislative news in California and beyond. State WIC staff will provide updates on hot topics in the WIC community to wrap it all up.

We hope this time together in Sacramento—and the weeks and months that follow—inspires WIC managers to network, collaborate, and problem-solve for the best outcomes. As a team, we can continue to make a positive difference for California WIC families!
Legislative Update

U.S. Government Shutdown—CWA Turns Up The Heat!

A prolonged federal government shutdown threatens the California WIC program’s ability to serve participants beyond the end of October and has shaken stakeholders’ confidence in the program. At press time, California’s local agencies have been directed to issue vouchers only one month at a time and WIC-authorized grocers have been warned that they will be terminated for failing to redeem them.

The White House and Senate—controlled by Democrats—have made it clear that they will not accede to demands from the U.S. House—controlled by Republicans—that a Continuing Resolution (CR) funding the federal government be contingent on riders defunding programs they don’t like.

If Congress fails to pass a CR to re-open the government before November 1, WIC providers face an unprecedented situation. Local agencies would be forced to turn participants away and end benefits. Pregnant women and newborn infants could go without critical nutrition and direct support, an unacceptable scenario.

On October 7, CWA launched a Rapid Response campaign (see page 4) to urge California’s congressional delegation—particularly Republicans—to immediately pass a clean CR and allow WIC and other programs providing assistance to vulnerable low-income families to continue into FY 2014 without life-threatening disruptions.

California 2013: A Successful Legislative Year!

Cheers erupted in CWA’s office on October 9 when we learned that Senate Bill 402 had been signed into law by Governor Brown. Authored by State Senator Kevin de León (D-LA), SB 402 requires all perinatal hospitals in California to implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding per the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (or an alternate evidence-based option which includes targeted outcomes) by January 2025.

The passage of this groundbreaking legislation means that we are a huge step closer to our goal of all California mothers having the opportunity and support to successfully breastfeed their babies no matter where they are born!

The governor also signed some key bills supported by CWA that will improve health and well-being for families across the State:

- **SB 252 (Liu)** exempts some pregnant women from CalWorks welfare-to-work requirements and clarifies laws allowing women to breastfeed in public.
- **AB 191 (Bocanegra)** makes people already receiving Medi-Cal benefits automatically eligible to receive CalFresh benefits.
- **SB 672 (Leno)** simplifies verification of dependent care expenses for working families receiving CalFresh benefits.
- **AB 290 (Alejo)** will educate newly-licensed child care providers about early childhood nutrition and the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Thanks to all who helped support WIC-related legislation this year. We couldn’t succeed without YOU!

Breastfeeding Advocates from the California Breastfeeding Coalition and CWA with Senator Kevin de León worked to promote SB 402.

SAVE THE DATE!

CWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW
April 6-9, 2014
Town & Country • San Diego
WE NEED WIC: TURN UP THE HEAT!

Thanks to the hard work of WIC Ambassadors over the past few tumultuous years, we have many “faces of WIC” stories to tell: moving personal videos, endorsements from over 500 business owners and community organizations, and thousands of signed paper plates from grateful WIC families. Visit the We Need WIC page at www.calwic.org to see these real-life examples of why WE NEED WIC!

At press time, CWA was still Turning Up the Heat with a rapid response campaign, using these stories to send daily messages via Twitter to California members of Congress until they act on a Continuing Resolution to ensure future WIC funding.

We encourage you to help CWA keep the heat on:

1. Help us go viral!
   Share and re-tweet our Facebook and Twitter messages widely, especially to your members of Congress.

2. Educate your member of Congress!
   The National WIC Association has an easy-to-use online form (at www.nwica.org) for emailing them about the current threats to WIC funding. Be sure to do this on your own time, using your own computer, not while working at WIC.

Thank You!

CWA sincerely appreciates the 500-plus businesses and community organizations (listed on facing page) that have joined California’s WIC Business-Community Alliance and endorsed our Statement of Support for Full Funding of the WIC Program. We will continue communicating this broad support for WIC to decision makers at all levels. This is yet another example of how WIC works when we work together!

Get & stay connected!

Visit CWA on Facebook! (Search for California WIC Association.) Follow us on Twitter, too! You’ll find us at www.twitter.com/calwic....and read our blog at www.calwic.org!
Delta Health Care WIC held their 2nd Annual Breastfeeding Celebration in Stockton during World Breastfeeding Week 2013.

A welcome station provided attendees with Delta Health Care canvas shopping bags with “goodies” generously donated by a variety of companies and local businesses, maps of the event, and raffle tickets for door prizes. WIC staff in matching teal t-shirts encouraged visitors to check out booths sponsored by community resource organizations, including the Emergency Food Bank, San Joaquin County Breastfeeding Coalition, and Head Start.

Other booths, staffed by WIC employees, featured information on working and breastfeeding, infant nutrition, baby behaviors, and mom-to-mom support groups. A Breastfeeding Boutique offered gently used items for purchase with “Mommy Dollars” that participants earn by attending WIC classes. The Photo Booth is always popular!

State Senator Galgiani, State Assemblymember Eggman, and Congressman McNerney sent their staff, who showed a genuine interest and recognized Delta Health Care’s valuable contribution to the residents of San Joaquin County. A highlight of this year’s Celebration was the live remote broadcast on local Spanish-language radio. And upbeat “regional Latin” music provided a festive atmosphere.

Health Educator Rachel Yellowowl led a group of WIC and Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, managers, and others to organize the event. Even before the day was over, many WIC employees were seen excitedly chatting about ideas for an “even bigger and better” Breastfeeding Celebration next year!

Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo WIC Program teamed up with Imperial County’s Breastfeeding Coalition and La Leche League of Imperial Valley to celebrate and promote World Breastfeeding Week.

In past years, the Coalition had celebrated the week with an event called “The World’s Largest Baby Shower.” This year, the team decided to hold smaller events throughout the community in order to reach more people.

These photos illustrate highlights from the busy week:

Delta Health Care WIC staff shared valuable nutrition and breastfeeding resources to families attending the event.

A breastfeeding promotion walk and resource fair at the local mall.

The children’s book We Like to Nurse, Too by Mary Young and La Leche League’s The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding were donated to every library in the county.
Local Agency News

Monterey County Breastfeeding Awareness Walk 2013

In celebration of August World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) festivities, the Monterey County WIC Program hosted the 7th Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk this month at the Salinas WIC Clinic. This year’s WBW theme, “Breastfeeding Support—Close to Mothers,” focused on the importance of peer support in helping mothers establish and sustain breastfeeding.

In addition to the walk, more than twenty local health agencies from throughout Monterey County participated in the event by offering free services and information to more than 200 participants.

Imperial County Board of Supervisors Proclamation of World Breastfeeding Week

Medications and Mother’s Milk by Dr. Thomas Hale, plus breastfeeding display materials and information, were donated to every pharmacy in the county.

A breastfeeding celebration at the City of El Centro’s Community Center and Splash Pad.

Clockwise from top left: Monterey County Peer Counseling staff; walk participants follow route along business district of East Salinas; WIC employee Sara Gallagher leads walkers in Zumba warm-up; families visit health fair booths after the Walk.
Breastfeeding News

Regional Breastfeeding Liaisons: WIC Change Agents

California WIC has a long history of being on the cutting edge with thoughtful strategies for program improvement, and the ‘pilot’ Regional Breastfeeding Liaison (RBL) project is one of the latest examples of innovative ideas for quality outcomes.

While the RBLs have been in their communities for only three years or less, they have facilitated significant outcomes in their counties and regions. Recognizing that improved hospital breastfeeding support was a key factor in improving WIC breastfeeding rates, many RBLs work with local hospitals. Additionally, based on identified needs from the local WIC Breastfeeding Community Assessments, RBLs reach out to worksites, insurers or medical providers in a county or region.

A large part of the success of the RBLs is due to their laser focus on systems change: working on top levels of the Spectrum of Prevention to address organizational policies and practices, foster coalitions, and educate providers.

California is on a roll with hospital breastfeeding improvements, and the RBLs have had good outcomes with the many hospital systems in their counties and regions. Here are just a few examples of successes to which they have contributed:

- From 2011 to 2012, exclusive breastfeeding rates in hospitals increased in San Mateo county (average of 9.5 percent), Contra Costa county (up to seven percent), and San Francisco county (up to 25 percent!).
- O’Connor Hospital of Santa Clara county now requires all pediatricians to receive lactation education as a prerequisite for hospital privileges.
- Contra Costa county trainings and events related to hospital breastfeeding rates and policies focus on addressing the low rates of breastfeeding for African American moms.
- In the Sacramento region, 250 RNs, 77 Ob-Gyn providers, and 100 pediatric and neonatology providers and residents have received breastfeeding education.

While they don’t provide direct services, these professionals are true WIC ambassadors. As such, they develop strong professional relationships and networks, showcase quality WIC services and resulting health outcomes, and lead collaborative efforts toward policy improvements that will impact WIC outcomes and reduce health disparities.

These are uncertain times, but we can all learn from the fast and strategic work of our RBLs, as we strive to protect our WIC programs and provide effective services.

Wiggle breaks? Hula hoops? Running buddies? Weight loss by teams? Ever since North County Health Services WIC (NCHS) made the commitment to strive for WIC Worksite Wellness Certification, the entire agency has embraced wellness and supported staff to meet their own health-related goals.

How It Looks
Walk into any NCHS worksite and you might see... staff saying “hello” at a conveniently-located safe drinking water cooler. A WIC worker hula-hooping in the hallway! A small group walking briskly or running past you at lunchtime. A group dancing to a Zumba DVD during afternoon break. At each monthly staff meeting and annual retreat, a site team leads a “wiggle break.” At any time, staff chat about the latest tips or recipes posted on Wellness Corner bulletin boards, featured in the monthly Wellness Calendars, or sent via weekly email messages. A nursing employee steps out for a discreet break, glad that she’s able to maintain her milk supply and continue to exclusively breastfeed her child while working full-time.

How It Happens
Enthusiastic managers embrace wellness by setting an example themselves. A Wellness Team, comprised of a Wellness Champion from each worksite, engenders an atmosphere that promotes wellness among co-workers. But most importantly, employees participate with a willingness to encourage each other, share responsibilities, and even have some fun! Employees report positive changes at home, too, such as eating more whole grains, or drinking more water and less soda.

Your Turn!
By now you’ve read about several of the 32 California WIC agencies certified as Well WIC Worksites. Over time, we hope you can really picture them and, if your agency has yet to become certified, get inspired to follow their lead! For more information, visit http://calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksites-wellness-connection or contact Teresa at tmorris@calwic.org.
California WIC Comings and Goings

**STATE TRANSITIONS:** On September 6, the California Department of Public Health announced that WIC Division Chief Erika Trainer would be transferred to the MCAH Division effective immediately. Assistant WIC Chief Lisa Kawano is serving as Acting Division Chief, and Chris Nelson, Assistant Deputy Director of CDPH Center for Family Health, will continue as lead of the USDA cost containment work. A renewed search for a WIC Division Chief will soon take place. Warm best wishes to Erika!

**CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Barbara Sainz has traveled quite a journey in her 21 years of WIC service, but it’s not over yet. Starting in 1992 for the United Health Centers WIC program as a clerk, she trained as a WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) and now works for Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission WIC.

Seeking new challenges, Barbara returned to school in 2008 for an Associate degree in Healthcare Administration. Yet with a keen interest in nutrition, that wasn’t enough, so she continued and is now in the dietetics program at California State University of Fresno. With support from Fresno EOC WIC, she’s on the road to becoming a WIC Registered Dietitian.

Barbara has kept her grades up while continuing to be a wife and mother of three children (and her Chihuahua, Ray). She reflects, “I see the wonderful role model I have become for them. With family and employer support, I know I can complete my goal!”

**RETIRED:** Eloise Jenks, PHFE WIC Director for over 37 years, retired on October 1. The 600-strong PHFE WIC staff was able to say good-bye to their nurturing and fearless leader over a week of farewell parties at PHFE Headquarters in Irwindale. Eloise’s outstanding and numerous contributions to CWA and the national WIC community will be celebrated at the Fall Conference. We miss you already, Eloise!

**RETIRED:** Eardell Harrison recently retired as Chief of High Risk Services at LA BioMed WIC. In her 38 years of WIC service, Eardell helped guide staff in preventing domestic violence and child abuse and addressing severe anemia, high lead levels, premature births, and obesity. Many registered dietitians at SLAHP/LA Biomed credit her with unwavering support as they pursued dietetic registration. Eardell and her staff proudly boast 255 years of total WIC experience!

**In Memoriam**

Sue Kaiser, a founding WIC Director and CWA supporter, has passed away. Sue started the Butte County WIC program in 1977, and grew it from card tables in church basements to permanent locations in Chico and Oroville. She mentored current Director Julie Wetmore and then retired in 1998 to enjoy family and travel. Services are on November 3, Trinity Methodist Church, Chico. Cards can be sent c/o Julie Wetmore, Chico WIC, 2491 Carmichael Drive, Chico, CA 95928.
Scholarship News

CNC Scholar: Meet Teresa Nina Legg

Those who knew Anne Patterson know that recipients of the California Nutrition Corps scholarship in her memory have to be exceptional. That certainly seems an apt description of Teresa Nina Legg, this year’s awardee.

Born to a single mother in rural Mexico, Nina was raised by her grandmother with 12 other children. After completing elementary school, she made the hour-long walk to junior high to continue learning. At age 15 and knowing no English, Nina came to the U.S. to continue her education. At 17, she joined the Army National Guard to help pay for school, but soon after high school graduation was deployed to Iraq for a year.

Upon her return to California, Nina began working toward her goal: to become a Registered Dietitian (RD). She attended San Diego City College, then San Diego State University, working throughout to support herself and become the first person in her family to earn a college degree.

In her nine years as an Army sergeant, Nina says she “learned leadership skills and the importance of good public relations.” Exposure to different cultures helped her identify with people from a wide range of backgrounds, something which has helped her in working at WIC.

Nina began her WIC experience as a five-month volunteer at Scripps Mercy WIC Program. She soon realized that this field was a great fit, while her supervisor, Lynn Martin, and coworkers found her “energetic and friendly, with a positive attitude and willingness to help out wherever needed.” Hired as a Nutrition Care Technician for the next few years, she was motivated by the WIC participants who “brighten my day because I see that I am making a difference in their lives.”

Nina enrolled in the San Diego WIC Dietetic Internship Program in March 2012 while continuing to work in WIC. According to Internship Director Brenda Reynosa, her “personable, outgoing, and inquisitive” nature came through once again. Nina passed the dietetic registration exam in July 2013 and recently began working part time at the UC Irvine Dialysis Center, while continuing to work at WIC.

“I am extremely grateful for everyone I have encountered on my journey to becoming a Registered Dietitian. To my WIC family, please know that I THANK YOU for every experience I’ve had with you!” -Nina Legg

Coming Soon: 2014 CNC Scholarships!

The California Nutrition Corps scholarship fund supports employees of California local WIC programs who are advancing their professional careers within the WIC program. Applicants must be currently employed in a WIC program for at least six continuous months and enrolled in a dietetic internship, undergraduate, or graduate program. Important dates:

November 1, 2013 ...............Applications available online
January 17, 2014 ...............Completed applications due
February 24, 2014 ...............Awardees notified

For full details, visit http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/cnc-scholarships. Questions?
Contact Teresa Morris at tmorris@calwic.org or (530) 750-2280.
Contribute to the WIC Watch!

Share your best practices and success stories:

**WINTER 2014**
Focus TBD
Deadline: December 16, 2013

**SPRING 2014**
Spring Conference Edition
Deadline: February 24, 2014

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Save the Dates

**CALIFORNIA BREASTFEEDING SUMMIT**
January 30-31, 2014
Lions Gate Hotel & Conference Ctr
N. Highlands (Sacramento)

**CWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW**
April 6-9, 2014
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CWA warmly congratulates Julie Grunsky, Delta Health Care WIC (left), and Julie Wetmore, Butte County WIC (right), on receiving the 2013 California WIC Career Achievement Awards!