



WIC watch

#WICStrong

Thank goodness we are who we are! WIC providers are a strong, committed and competent workforce serving millions of women, infants and children in California and across the nation. Let's be frank: there are a lot of challenges for the WIC program right now, and California is especially hard hit. Program participation decline, an urgent need to modernize and innovate operations and service delivery, threats to immigrant and low-income families, exorbitant housing prices and extreme shortages, workforce recruitment and retention challenges, and climate changes contributing to raging wildfires create a historically difficult reality.

Yet it is not surprising that in the face of those challenges we are standing strong — #WICStrong, that is — and moving forward. Excitement is building for the California WIC Card, to be debuted in less than a year! Kudos to Solano and Napa WIC as the first agencies to pilot and rollout the WIC Card. California's new MIS, officially named WIC WISE, is under construction! Many thanks to the Local Agency Readiness Committee and state staff for your expertise building this critical capacity. The new breastfeeding curriculum and TOTS training are coming to your regions.

For the challenges we have less control over, we are standing up, pushing back, and strategizing. CWA has been working to address the threats to public charge rules. Our Dietetic Internship Coordinators are strategizing on retaining our very valuable workforce. We all must take every opportunity to expose and engage on housing issues. Our local agencies, staff and participants impacted by wildfires and other environmental events are working with State WIC staff for best practices in responses, communications and support, but the impact is still heartbreaking.

Decision makers, community members, and stakeholders are always impressed with the extent of services our local agencies provide, and especially the commitment and passion of WIC staff. In our daily work we might forget that, but we need to acknowledge we are #WICStrong!



CWA Annual Conference attendees in 2008 spelled WIC. We're still #WICStrong!

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Exploring Issues at Fall Convening

Local WIC directors and supervisors are getting a chance to dig deeper into two challenging endeavors at this year's CWA Fall Education Day, November 6. If you couldn't join us in Sacramento, read about them here then follow up with your colleagues to explore local solutions.



Horizontal Integration...What the heck is it, anyway?

Horizontal Integration is a mouthful. H.I., as it is known informally, describes how different health and social service programs link to share information, referrals, eligibility screenings and applications. Ideally, this would be a smooth electronic process with streamlined questions and auto-filling forms that enroll individuals and set them up with appointments to receive benefits in multiple programs. Integration can also include local processes and paper-and-pencil type linkages, with the same goal of maximizing access to services for eligible individuals.

Leaders at the Department of Health and Human Services and Office of Systems Integration (OSI) are committed to improving program linkages. They support a public-private workgroup to address the MANY details of horizontal integration. With the development of WIC WISE, California's new Management Information System (MIS), being part of integration planning is a critical opportunity for WIC. At CWA's Fall Education Day, we will hear from OSI staff about the state work to improve program linkages.

The WIC Workforce: Our Most Valuable Resource

California has the nation's largest workforce of credentialed WIC nutrition and breastfeeding professionals who possess the skills to meet the growing needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population and address the health disparities in our communities.

WIC, like other health intervention providers, continues to face growing workforce shortages of nutrition professionals. Recruitment and retention of WIC nutritionists and lactation consultants is becoming increasingly difficult. Comparatively low salaries, high housing costs, rural and frontier needs, and new requirements for Master's Degrees and expectations of the emerging workforce are creating challenges in filling positions and retaining staff.

As health care changes, there's a growing need for a culturally- and ethnically-diverse workforce like WIC's, with expertise in providing culturally-appropriate nutrition and breastfeeding counseling. WIC has an opportunity to play a role in supporting patients in the community addressing their needs for social determinants of health and preventing chronic diseases such as diabetes.

At CWA's Fall Education Day, we will hear from Nancy Nesa, MA, RDN, California WIC State Career Development and Internship Coordinator, about the challenges and strategies to protect the California WIC workforce as we go forward. Now is the time to assess local agency needs, identify gaps and strengths, and create strategies to maintain a strong public health nutrition and breastfeeding workforce. Learn more about WIC Careers at <https://wiccareercorner.com/>.



San Diego State University WIC Dietetic Interns with Nancy Nesa, State WIC Career Development/Internship Coordinator, gathered at the 2018 CWA Annual Conference.

New Tools for Farm2WIC Success

CWA produced two new publications last summer, in time to help you have a successful farmers' market season. Yet they can be useful all year! Both are linked on our Farm2WIC webpage or available in print from CWA. <http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families/farm2wic>



Farm2WIC Toolkit: Connecting Farmers, Market Managers, Local WIC Agencies & Partners with Families for Vibrant Markets and Healthy Communities



This 24-page Toolkit is rich with Farm2WIC information, Resources, and Tips for Success for market and local WIC agency staff. CWA sent a Toolkit binder to every local agency. Find yours and use it to plan how you'll promote the use of WIC checks at your local markets this year or next season.

Farm2WIC: Tapping New Markets, Building Healthy Communities

This 8-page issue brief identifies the challenges and recommends solutions to increasing access among WIC families to fresh produce at farmers' markets. It's a great resource to share with farmers, market managers, supporters of farmers' markets and WIC folks, but especially local and state decision makers.

Did you enjoy distributing and using CWA's special edition of the **California Farmers' Market Cookbooks?**

You can still purchase them from Nutrition Matters; see the Farm2WIC webpage for a link.

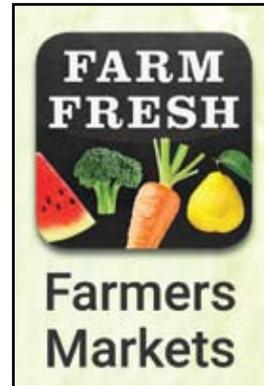


WIC Mobile Adds Farm Fresh Icon

At the end of August, something new appeared on the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) WIC mobile website: a Farmers' Market icon! If you haven't already explored it, take a look at this new feature allowing anyone using WIC mobile to locate authorized farmers' markets that accept WIC checks. <https://m.wic.ca.gov/>



The most requested feature, the market locator, provides not only a map to the market but also the markets' address, location information,



days, hours, season, and manager's business phone number. What's more, when CDPH updates this kind of market info in their records, it automatically updates on the website too.

A red apple icon identifies farmers' markets where the Fruit and Vegetable



Checks (FVC, also called Cash Value Vouchers) are accepted as well as the seasonal Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks. Like most of the information on this site, the new information is in English and Spanish — just click the Language/Idioma tab.

In addition to searching for a farmers' market, users can get instructions on receiving both kinds of WIC checks (FMNP and FVC) from their WIC agency, and using both kinds of WIC checks with farmers. The State WIC Farmers' Market team contact information is also there. Please contact them if you notice any errors or if you have an idea for other information to include.

Watch the CDPH/WIC internal website for information on Farm2WIC training opportunities in 2019, and plan to attend with your local farmers!

State Legislation



We were fortunate this year to work again with the California Breastfeeding Coalition and Assemblymember Blanca Rubio to co-sponsor ACR 234, a Resolution to recognize August 2018 as Breastfeeding Month in California. Although August is past, these efforts continue to raise awareness of breastfeeding’s role in supporting healthy communities.

Governor Brown wrapped up his final legislative session by reviewing and signing or vetoing over 1,000 bills, including many that addressed relevant issues for California children and families, such as:

- Lactation accommodation in California workplaces, state colleges and universities
- Lactation policy for inmates in California jails
- School meals for low-income students
- Federally Qualified Health Center billing restrictions
- Sugar-sweetened beverages in restaurant “kids’ meals”

Visit our state policy webpage for our full bill monitor list and state policy updates: <http://www.calwic.org/policy-center/state>.

Educate Your Legislators

When you work with WIC, it’s easy to forget that not everyone is as familiar as you are with the program. It’s important to share information with policymakers about how WIC serves young children and their families, and **you** are just the person to do it!

Personal visits are highly effective in helping legislators understand your WIC program, and they need to hear from the communities they represent. Chatting with them in their office about key WIC and breastfeeding issues is **not** lobbying; it is public issues education and **every** WIC employee can do this.

If you couldn’t join us for **Capitol Education Day** visits on November 7th, there are many ways to be a WIC Ambassador. When was the last time your Congressional Representative saw the inside of your WIC site? If you can’t remember, it’s been too long! Contact your member of Congress today and invite them for a visit! Not sure how to begin? CWA has many tools and resources available at <http://www.calwic.org/policy-center/toolkits>. Questions? Contact Sarah at sdiaz@calwic.org.

WIC protection and support at the federal level depends on policymakers having a working understanding of the support and value of WIC to their constituents. Last year we had an unprecedented number of legislators visiting WIC sites, with nearly 20 visits from federal representatives and more from state and local decision makers, but the work can’t stop there! Use your voice and expertise to help legislators understand the work you do and the needs and issues important to the communities you and they serve.



A Team from PHFE WIC Hosting Congresswoman Grace Napolitano for a Visit.

Federal Policy

2018 has been action-packed on the federal policy-front. Congress is facing key policy decisions around immigration and funding, among other things.

Immigration

After the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began large-scale family separation as part of the enforcement of



President Trump's "zero tolerance" policy, resulting in a national outcry and a court order to reunify families, the administration has struggled

with compliance. Hundreds of children remain separated from their families, and the DHS has proposed a new regulation that would permit indefinite detention of migrant children. DACA remains in place due to court order, despite the Attorney General's move to end it. The proposed change to expand the Public Charge immigration rule to include participation in several social programs — including SNAP and Medicaid — remains open for public comment in the Federal Register. See article at right.

Funding

An agreement was not reached by the September 30 deadline on the "minibus" spending bill package that would have included funding for WIC in FY 2019. In order to avoid an October 1 government shutdown, Congress chose to extend FY 2018 funding levels through December 7 with a continuing resolution until a final agreement can be reached. Another continuing resolution may be necessary to move past the holidays, unless swift agreement is reached in December.

At stake for WIC is not only the program's overall budget authority and rescission level, but also funding for set-asides, such as the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program. The Senate-passed Agriculture-FDA appropriations bill contained a nearly 15 percent increase for the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, thanks to an amendment by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA).

Public Charge

If you've been following immigration changes lately, you probably know that "public charge" refers to a person receiving public benefits above a certain amount or for longer than certain periods of time. The official draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to expand the public charge rule to more programs was posted on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) website on September 22.

This proposal **does not include** WIC, Head Start, or several other programs listed by the earlier draft leaked in February 2018, and it **does not** include dependent citizen children. However, it still stands to hurt many WIC families.

The programs that **are included** are SNAP (CalFresh), Medicaid (Medi-Cal), Section 8, and Low Income Subsidy for prescription drug costs under Medicare Part D, all of which many WIC families depend on. Additionally, many immigration lawyers are advising families to withdraw from all programs and some families are withdrawing on their own, out of fear.

The NPRM was entered into the Federal Register in early October, and the public comment period is open until December 10. DHS specifically requests feedback on the question of whether to include ANY public benefit program in a public charge determination.

The WIC community must forcefully reject this proposal and demand the explicit exclusion of WIC from any rule. Further, we must share with DHS the public health reasons that including programs like Medicaid and SNAP in a public charge determination is the wrong action to take.

CWA urges you to be a voice for WIC! **Commenting on these proposed regulations is not lobbying.** See our Federal Policy page for links to the NPRM, template comments, and a link for submitting your own comments. <http://www.calwic.org/policy-center/federal>



WIC Leadership Academy 2018 and Beyond



WIC Leadership Academy 2018 members gathered at the CWA Annual Conference in April.

It was a productive day for the Class of 2018 when they met in July for their second of four, day-long sessions. They explored many topics including conflict resolution, active listening, and tips and tools for effective communication. Class members found the time they spent working on use of 'I' statements to be very helpful. They also appreciated the opportunity to spend time getting to know each other and facilitator-trainers Rita Sever and Delfina Biondi. The class is meeting in November to coincide with the state Fall Convening, then for a final day in January.

California has many new local agency directors, young professionals and state staff. Opportunities to develop and sharpen leadership skills are vital to their current positions and overall career success and advancement. With the many upcoming changes, a toolbox of skills will be needed for effective communications and decision making.

Having received numerous requests from those of you wanting to participate next year, CWA is happy to announce we will sponsor WIC Leadership 2019, open to local agency and state staff. Consider building your skill toolbox with us! Watch the *Flash e-news* or visit our new website under Local Agency Support for more information and applications. Questions? Contact Lena, lworkman@calwic.org.

"It's helpful to learn tools to confront conflicts... Taking the time to realize the way we ask something of our staff gave me food for thought... I like that I can take information and activities back to the office and practice them right away."

Welcome, Jodi!

We are happy to announce that Jodi Mulligan-Pfile joined the CWA team on October 1. Jodi has been active in the Sacramento area, most recently serving as Development Director for Wellspring Women's Center. She has a diverse background in program management, project development,



volunteer coordination, nonprofit funds development, and event planning. Jodi enjoys the challenge of connecting and building relationships, and finding solutions for multiple partners. As the CWA Project Coordinator, she works on a range of projects including the conference curriculum, WIC Worksite Wellness, WIC Can Help and a wide variety of grant projects. She looks

forward to engaging on diverse issues, and getting to know the WIC community. Jodi and her wife are new parents of a seven-month-old son. Be sure to introduce yourself at the Fall Convening!

Best Wishes, Margaret!

After over seven productive years, we are saying 'Thank you and Best Wishes!' to Margaret Aumann, CWA Communications Coordinator, as she pursues musical and volunteer endeavors from her home in Chico while remaining open to new professional opportunities.



There are many ways you might have gotten to know Margaret as she filled a few roles at CWA. Perhaps you worked with her to help connect with farmers' markets. Others of you recognize her writing contributions as editor of the *WIC Watch* magazine and, before Sarah came, the *Flash e-news*. She might have supported your local agency as a Well WIC Worksite. She led annual and fall conference planning efforts, working with local/state agency committees, speakers, Board members and staff.

Margaret produced the monthly resources for *WIC Can Help* to support your referrals for WIC participants. Her other projects ranged from supporting inclusion of men and dads at WIC and developing the *9 Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Health Centers* to presenting webinar events, creating an online presentation platform, and maintaining our website. This fall, Margaret helped redesign our website and edit this *WIC Watch* before Sarah takes on that responsibility.

2018 Hospital Report & Fact Sheets

For the 12th straight year, in partnership with UC Davis Human Lactation Center and California Breastfeeding Coalition, CWA is preparing to release annual fact sheets and a report on California's in-hospital breastfeeding rates from 2017. Significant progress has been made since we started, with the number of baby-friendly hospitals growing from just 12 to about 100! And statewide breastfeeding rates have risen alongside this increase. Yet challenges remain, such as persistent racial disparities in breastfeeding rates that must be resolved to improve disparities in health outcomes.



Look for the coming release next month and check out previous years' fact sheets and reports at <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/breastfeeding>. Are

you proud of your local hospital's progress? Help us spread the word by working with Sarah (sdiaz@calwic.org) to contact your local news media about covering this story!

CALIFORNIA WIC ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

CATCH THE WAVE

WIC: MOVING FORWARD FOR FAMILIES

**27TH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW**
 APR 29 - MAY 1, 2019
 SAN DIEGO

Catch the wave as WIC surfs into the future! Mark your calendars for the **2019 CWA Conference & Trade Show** and plan to join us next spring in sunny San Diego. You won't want to miss California's premier statewide event providing stellar continuing education opportunities!

Preconference Seminars:
Sunday, April 28, 2019

Main Conference:
Mon., April 29 – Wed., May 1, 2019

Town & Country Resort & Convention Center

Registration opens December 1. Watch for more information on our website. <http://www.calwic.org>

California Nutrition Corps Scholarships

It's fall and the academic year is well underway ...and that includes finding a way to pay for advanced education and training! CWA is happy to announce that California Nutrition Corps Scholarships will be available again this year.



WIC employees pursuing their dietetic internship, undergraduate degree in nutrition, or graduate degree in nutrition, public health or administration are welcome to apply.

Applications, available November 15 on the CWA website, will be due in early 2019 with awards announced in March. Exact dates and details will be available soon. <http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/cnc-scholarships>

Connect with CWA

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Follow us on
[Twitter!](#)

Find us on
[Instagram!](#)

(Search for California WIC Association or calwic.)

What's New With WIC

Introducing the California WIC Card!

The California Department of Public Health, WIC Division (CDPH/WIC) is excited to announce the new California WIC Card, or WIC Card for short. The WIC Card will provide an easier way to issue food benefits and improve the shopping experience for WIC families and grocers.

- Each family will get one California WIC Card and it will have all of their family's food benefits on it.
- Local agency staff can quickly access family information and issue food benefits using the WIC Card.
- The WIC Card can easily be replaced if a participant's card is lost, damaged, or stolen.

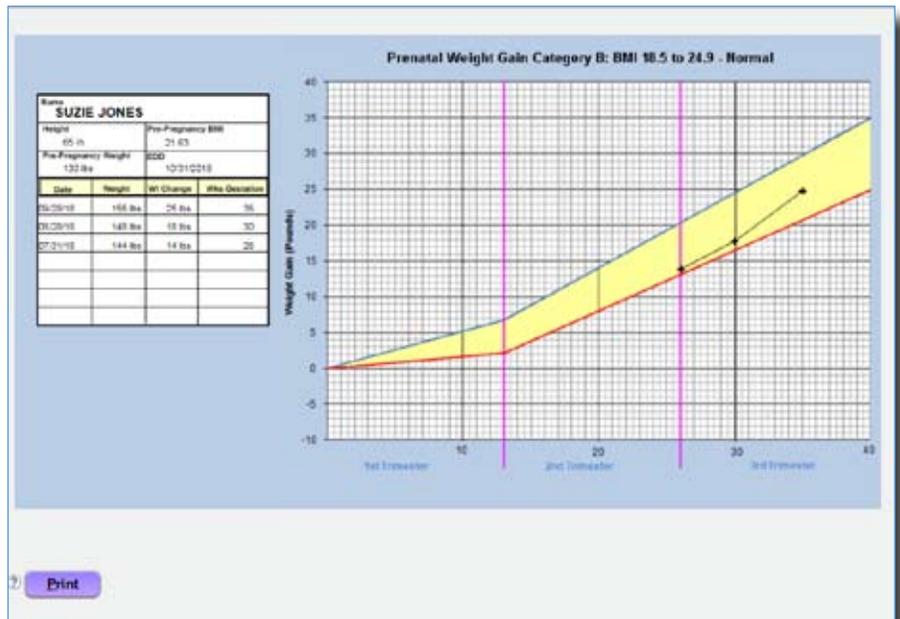


The New Management Information System (MIS)

The WIC Card is not the only new and exciting improvement coming to WIC! The name of the new MIS for California WIC is WIC WISE, which stands for WIC Web Information System Exchange. WIC WISE will have many features that will make daily business processes more streamlined.

Exciting features of WIC WISE for local agency staff:

- Generates electronic forms, such as the Rights and Responsibility form and the voter registration form
- Uploads documents, such as a therapeutic formula prescription from a provider
- Captures electronic signatures
- Provides a guided script for WIC staff to ensure accurate completion of each task
- Tracks inventory items, such as breast pumps and cardstock
- Nutrition and health assessment questions are built into the system
- Electronically plots individualized growth charts and prenatal weight gain charts



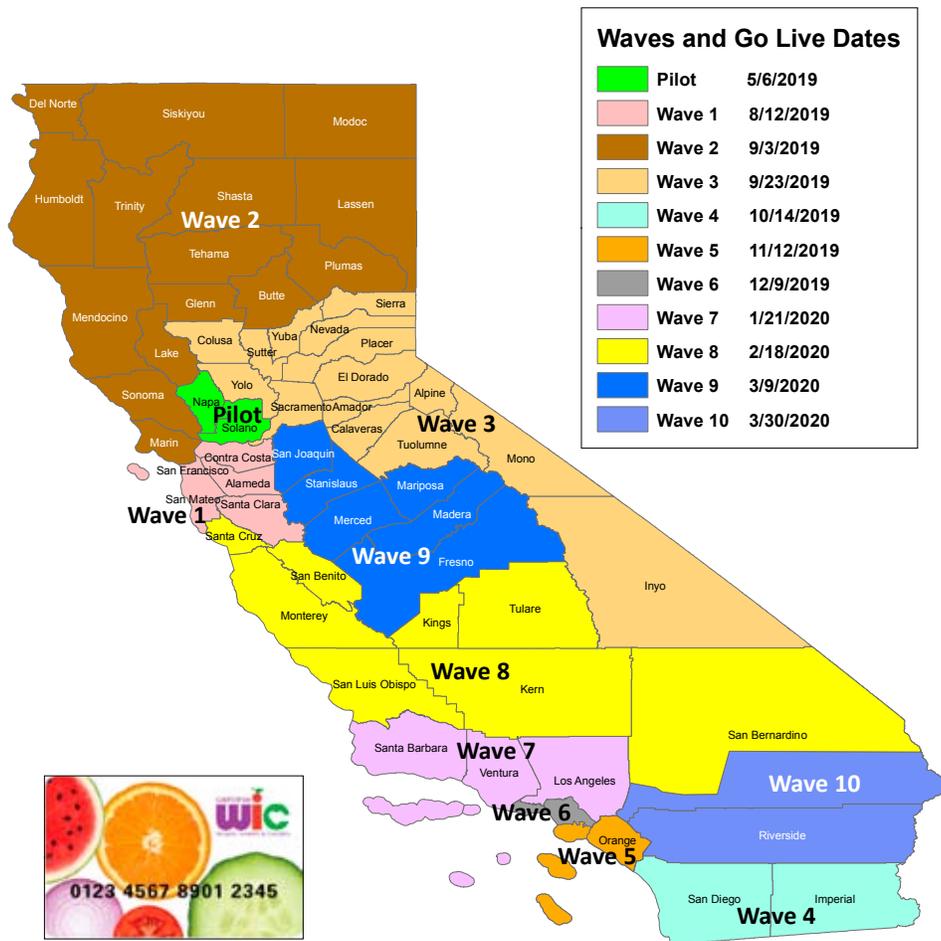
WIC Card and WIC WISE Implementation Rollout Waves

CDPH/WIC is also very pleased to share the final rollout schedule for the California WIC Card and WIC WISE.

The WIC Card and WIC WISE will be rolled out in waves by geographical area as shown in the map. The rollout will begin with a Pilot in Napa and Solano counties followed by 10 waves. Each wave consists of a 6 to 8 month period of planning, training, and implementation activities, concluding with the Go Live date. The Go Live date is the first day a local agency site begins issuing the WIC Card and using WIC WISE. A new wave will go live approximately every 3 weeks, with the last wave going live on March 30, 2020.

Factors considered in the creation of the rollout schedule include geography and distance between local agencies, weather, holidays, vendor density, food costs, facilities for training, staffing and training enrollment sizes, and feedback from WIC Card and WIC WISE contractors. CDPH/WIC stands ready to support each local agency in this major effort to improve the California WIC Program. For questions, please email CDPH/WIC at WICCard@cdph.ca.gov.

California WIC Card and WIC WISE Implementation Rollout Waves



9/27/2018



What is included in the Implementation Period?

The Implementation Period includes the activities involved in moving from the current WIC MIS and paper food instruments to using the WIC Card and WIC WISE. Successful implementation of WIC WISE and the WIC Card in a local agency will require the coordination of activities across a number of key tasks and milestones, including project management, organizational change management, staff training, technical readiness, data conversion, and communication. The following figure is a sample of the activities or tasks during a local agency's 6-8 month implementation period leading up to their "go-live" date. Local agency staff tasks are in red, WIC Card and WIC WISE project team tasks are in green, and tasks that require effort by both are in purple.

The 6 Tasks and Milestones for Local Agencies (see table on facing page)

- 1 Project Management:** Creating the local agency change team, reporting status, and monitoring readiness.
- 2 Organizational Change Management:** Comparing current business processes to WIC WISE, identifying differences and creating solutions.
- 3 Staff Training:** Planning for and participating in training on WIC WISE and the WIC Card and preparing and delivering information on changes to procedures and internal policies.
- 4 Technical Readiness:** Establishing connectivity and installing and testing new hardware and software.
- 5 Data Cleansing:** Distributing conversion reports to help local agency staff clean-up legacy MIS data.
- 6 Communications:** Sharing information with internal and external stakeholders about WIC WISE, the WIC Card and other changes.

Stay Tuned with WIC NEWS Publication!

CDPH/WIC is committed to keeping our key stakeholders informed about the exciting changes coming to the California WIC Program, which will have a positive impact on WIC families, local agencies, and grocers. The new monthly publication, WIC News, will provide information about the transition to the WIC Card and WIC WISE. CDPH/WIC will produce 3 versions of WIC News, each targeting a specific key stakeholder audience:

- WIC Local Agencies
- WIC Authorized Vendors
- Community Partners and Stakeholders

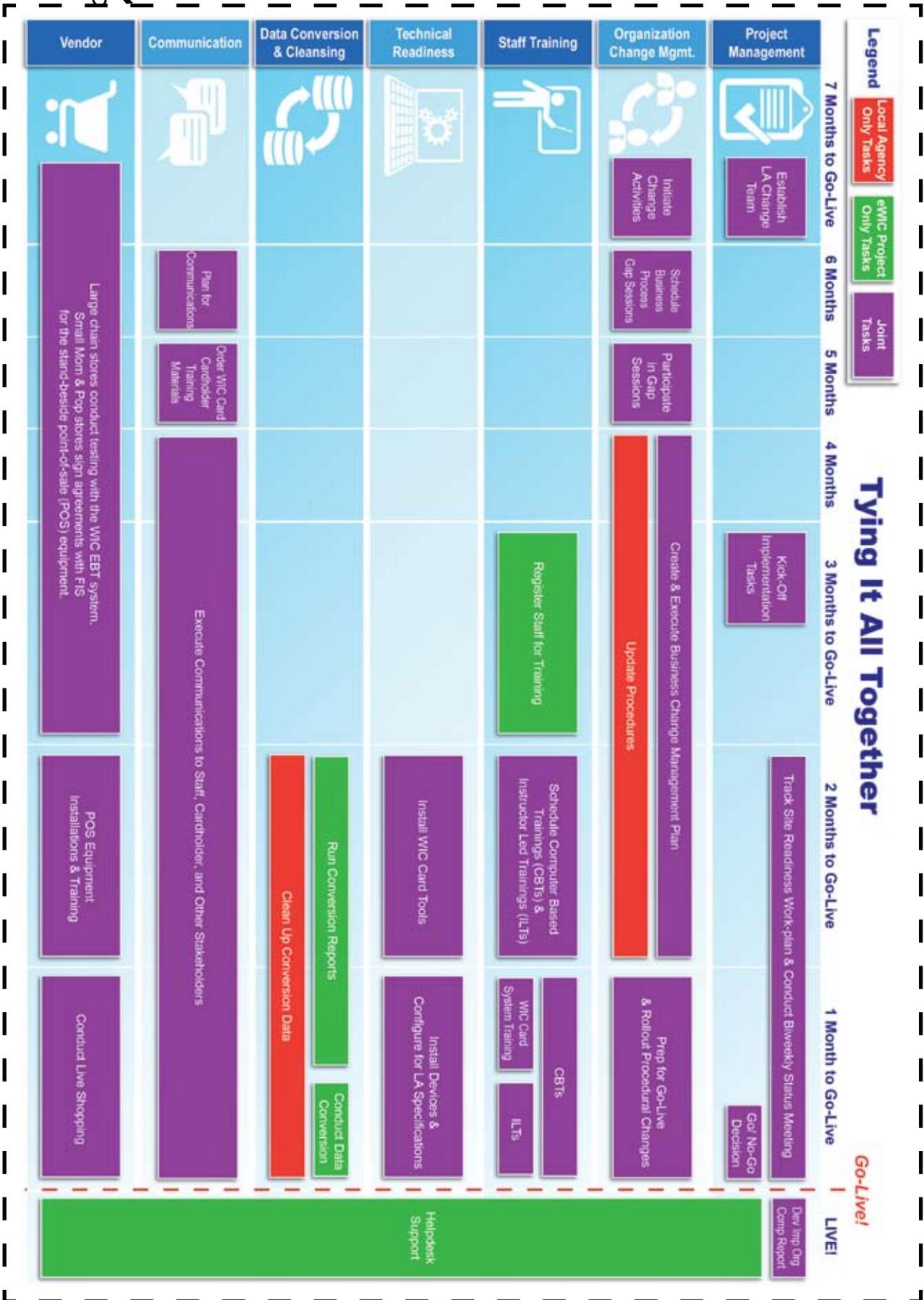
WIC News can be found on the CDPH/WIC website at www.wicworks.ca.gov.

For questions or to receive WIC News publication via email or mail, please contact us at WICCard@cdph.ca.gov.

CDPH/WIC will also provide other materials and resources throughout the implementation process. Publications and other materials will be posted at www.wicworks.ca.gov.



Draft template of WIC NEWS for illustration purposes only.



Legend
■ Local Agency Only Tasks
■ eWIC Project Only Tasks
■ Joint Tasks

Smile, California Campaign Spotlights Medi-Cal Dental

In October, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) launched *Smile, California*. This campaign educates eligible members about free and low-cost services available through Medi-Cal and makes it easier for members to access care.

The Medi-Cal Dental Program covers routine, preventive and restorative care for more than 13.5 million members in California, but less than half of child members and only about 20 percent of adults use these services each year.



Research earlier this year surveyed more than 2,600 parents of child members. Most (90 percent) of parents know Medi-Cal includes dental coverage, but they are less certain of the types of available services and the fact that these services are free for children. While parents

had different reasons for not using their child's benefit, the most common reasons were lack of need, lack of information, and concerns about providers.

Parents are aware that oral health is closely connected to overall health and are motivated by a desire for their children to be healthy. They are eager to take advantage of preventive services that guard against decay, like sealants and fluoride varnish.

So *Smile, California* was created to help members take full advantage of the services available to them, remove any mystery around dental coverage, and promote the benefits of regular dental visits. At the same time, the campaign aims to grow the provider network so members can easily find the care they need and want.

The centerpiece of the campaign is a new, mobile-enabled member website. At smilecalifornia.org and sonriecalifornia.org, members can get the facts about the Medi-Cal Dental Program. Information about covered services and oral health needs at every age and stage – including pregnancy – is included. Members can find a Medi-Cal dentist, too.

Smile, California will also connect with members through social media, direct mail, community events and by partnering



with organizations across the state – like CWA and its member local agencies — that also serve Medi-Cal members. Look for new materials in multiple languages linked on our Oral Health WIC Can Help webpage: <http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-can-help/30-apr-oral-health>.

To match the increasing demand among members for dental services, Smile, California is also helping to expand the network of more than 10,000 dental providers and pursuing alternatives

like mobile care and teledentistry to bring care to more communities in California. Learn more at smilecalifornia.org.



"With one-third of Californians receiving dental care through Medi-Cal, greater member and provider participation will quickly add up to thousands of healthier smiles. This is a tremendous opportunity to have a positive impact on oral health status across California."

— Alani Jackson, Medi-Cal Dental Services Division Chief

WIC Supports Families When Disaster Strikes

In recent months, many California communities have suffered through massive, destructive wildfires. The Carr Fire surrounding Redding was particularly devastating. **Shasta County HSA WIC Program** staff stepped up to support survivors/victims in many ways, despite their own losses.

As the fire raged through the community, all WIC locations remained open. When a Local Assistance Center (LAC) was set up, WIC staff pulled together to ensure outreach and staffing at the LAC for the full seven days of operation. Several survivors just needed a friendly ear to listen to their stories; not surprisingly, WIC employees were willing and empathetic listeners.



Immediately after the LAC closed, FEMA set up the Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) at a different location. Once again, WIC staffed the DRC: serving participants; partnering with the child passenger safety seat program to have car seats available for families needing replacements; and directing families to other assistance as appropriate.

At both the LAC and DRC, WIC staff appreciated the recognition they received from community members. Many WIC participants were in tears, overjoyed their food vouchers could be replaced. Shasta County WIC is grateful for the disaster exceptions granted by State WIC, allowing them to re-issue vouchers for those affected by the Carr Fire.

WIC professionals continue to provide an empathetic ear to those who need to talk about the disaster. The WNAs and Breastfeeding Peer Counselors have heard many stories and continue to support each family with openness and compassion. In their regular peer phone calls, Peer Counselors — including one who was evacuated



Fire damage to homes and community buildings impact families physically and emotionally.

for two weeks herself — directly supported families during the traumatic events. They switched gears from breastfeeding as the main message of each contact to asking how mom and family were doing in the wake of the Carr Fire. First and fore-

Shasta County WIC staff used their many skills to care for WIC families impacted by the Carr Fire.



most, they asked if the family was safe, evacuated, or in need of referrals to resources.

Being pregnant or having a newborn during this tragedy caused a lot of emotional upheaval. To help women cope, WIC staff changed the format of Shasta Moms Circle to allow time for each mother who wanted to share her story to do so. Many of the Peer Counselors worked with moms whose babies were in Mercy Medical Center NICU when it was evacuated, handling those conversations with grace. They are skilled in truly listening and empathizing with the WIC families as well as referring them to practical resources.

About two months after the disaster, Shasta County Administration provided a presentation on Compassion Fatigue. Most WIC employees attended and were reminded about the importance of taking care of themselves so they can continue to support others.

CWA commends the selfless response of the WIC staff in Shasta County and so many other California communities impacted by natural disasters. Kudos for demonstrating the ultimate Culture of Caring!



"It was amazing to see people who had lost so much begin to let go of their pain while interacting with WIC staff, even if it was for a moment. We will continue to support our community, families, and each other on our journey through the recovery process."

— Shasta County WIC staff

#3MonthBFchallenge

The African American Breastfeeding Cultural Outreach Taskforce (BCOT)'s mission is to revive the art of breastfeeding in the Black communities of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. BCOT celebrated Black Breastfeeding Week by launching the **#3MonthBFchallenge**.

Following several community discussions with mothers and providers in Alameda County, BCOT identified key barriers that were keeping mothers from meeting their breastfeeding goals.



BCOT members include Tamentanefer Lumukanda, IBCLC; Brandi Gates, IBCLC; DeLinda Horton; and Allana Samuel, IBCLC

BCOT decided to address the barriers by providing a system of coordinated care, prenatal education and early breastfeeding support through culturally sensitive peer counselors, IBCLCs in the WIC program and local hospitals, and a social media campaign.

While taking the 3 Month Breastfeeding Challenge, moth-

ers are encouraged, supported and celebrated as they overcome the initial challenges many women face during the early stages of breastfeeding. Studies show if women can breastfeed for at least 3 months they are more likely to continue breastfeeding and reach their breastfeeding goals.

Kudos to the following WIC agencies for their involvement: **Alameda County, City of Berkeley, Contra Costa County (Richmond site), and West Oakland Health Center!**



To kick off BBW and their #3MonthBFchallenge, BCOT hosted an event for BF advocates and families. The next day, BCOT hosted an evening of fun at the Oakland Museum for all families.

#LoveOnTop

LABioMed/South Los Angeles Health Project honored expectant and breastfeeding moms at their Compton WIC site. For this first Black Breastfeeding Week Celebration, with the theme #LoveOnTop, they collaborated with Nekisha Killings of Lioness Lactation and Soul Food for Your Baby.

Ms. Killings led a candle-lighting ceremony to commemorate mothers and babies who weren't there to celebrate. Retired teacher, Frances Page, addressed the importance of talking, reading and singing to your baby. Moms enjoyed a slide show of mothers breastfeeding around the world, as well as seeing themselves in another slide show of previous group sessions.



Janice Ahana, founder of Compton WIC's African American Breastfeeding Family Group, welcomed mothers to their first BBW Celebration.

Mothers received gift bags which included a breastfeeding poem, earrings and other goodies. Raffle winners were able to choose from many donated items, including nursing covers, bras and clothing. Moms, dads, and babies participated in a nursing photo session; photos were mailed to families afterward. Families enjoyed the camaraderie, activities, food and gifts, and all gave rave reviews of the event!



Guest speaker Frances Page emphasized the benefits of music in building the breastfeeding bond.

"We thank our partners for their time, expertise and generosity, and each of our own agency's departments for their collaboration. It truly takes a village!"

—Compton WIC staff

CinnaMoms

The Public Health Foundation Enterprises (PHFE) WIC CinnaMoms program hosted its 4th Annual Black Breastfeeding Week celebration at the Crenshaw Family YMCA in Los Angeles. WIC participants and CinnaMoms facilitators from PHFE came together to celebrate community, breastfeeding, and the journey of motherhood. This year's theme was **Transforming into Me: Motherhood and Beyond.**

The event brought together families from several WIC Centers and from The Children's Collective Black Infant Health program. WIC staff served and celebrated 63 CinnaMoms, 10 CinnaDads, 14 children, and a host of breastfed babies and guests.



CinnaMoms creates a cultural space that promotes empowerment and self-transformation for African American women as they come together to share and advocate for breastfeeding, parenting, and health for the entire life course.

Attendees visited booths of 20 community partner organizations providing free services, including Medi-Cal and CalFresh enrollment. Highlights included roundtable chats similar to the "Red Table Talk" created by Jada Pinkett Smith but with a CinnaMoms spin.

There was also a painting station, where families illustrated their breastfeeding and motherhood journey, CinnaSpeaks segment with inspirational spoken word, family photo booth, CinnaKids corner, Men and CinnaDads Cave, and much more. For more information and to see the beautiful photos from the event, visit www.cinnamoms.org and www.phfewic.org.



PHFE WIC's CinnaTeam is composed of Nutritionists and WIC Nutrition Assistants from the South Los Angeles area.

Sistah Connection

The **Riverside University Health System** Black Infant Health (BIH) and WIC Programs partnered with **San Bernardino County** BIH and WIC Programs to jointly host Black Breastfeeding Week celebrations last summer. It's something they've done for the past three years through Sistah Connection, a RUHS WIC breastfeeding peer counseling program.

Since 2004, **Sistah Connection** has provided Peer Counselor (PC) services, support groups, and encouragement for moms throughout their breastfeeding journey to help increase breastfeeding initiation and duration among African American women.

Events hosted in both counties were designed to educate community members about the importance of quality



Moms networked while breastfeeding at the "Love on Top" event in Riverside.



BBW collaborators included Kayellen Young, RUHS; Clarese Hill, Sistah Connection; Laurie Haessley, RUHS (retired); Liza Jones and Davona Robertson, Sistah Connection.

prenatal care and breast feeding, recognizing the health disparities related to infant mortality and breastfeeding in African American communities. Most importantly,

they celebrated the accomplishments of women who have committed to breastfeed their babies.

This year's BBW theme was **"Love on Top."** Activities emphasized and promoted love over grief, doubt, sadness, lack of support, and other common challenges for new mothers. They also acknowledged families who have suffered the loss of a baby. The two agencies look forward to continuing this lasting partnership for years to come.

Recently on Board



CWA welcomes the following local agency WIC Directors/Coordinators who are new to their position in the last few months. We're glad you're a key part of Team WIC!



Charlene Chen
City of Pasadena



Amber McPherson
Butte County



Sarah Smith
Tulare County

Also (not pictured):

George Verastegui
Mendocino County

Wendy Joyner
*United Indian Health
(Interim Contact)*

Moving Along

Tracie Barrow, Retired

Tracie Barrow started her career with a UC Davis dietetics/community nutrition degree and then worked her way along the lifespan... backwards! After working in senior nutrition programs, Tracie spent several years as a school district foodservice director. When she landed in 2003 as a part-time nutritionist for **County of Sonoma WIC**, her passion for



maternal/child nutrition and breastfeeding was ignited.

Believing WIC truly is the premier public health nutrition program, Tracie took the **Mendocino County WIC** Director job in 2005. It was an excellent place to learn how to become a WIC Director by taking on many different roles in a small WIC agency. She remembers fondly how hard that small staff worked,

traveling great distances to serve WIC participants.

In 2007, Tracie returned to Sonoma County as Supervising Nutritionist then Director, where she helped the WIC and Peer Counseling staff build an award-winning breastfeeding support program. Exclusive breastfeeding rates rose from 25 to 40 percent, earning their agency one of five inaugural USDA Loving Support Premier Gold Breastfeeding awards. The WIC team also integrated a dental screening program, with over 13,000 visits. Tracie is also proud of her staff's work to host a farmers' market at their Santa Rosa WIC site. She says, "It's a labor of love but well worth the effort to make it easier for WIC participants to use their farmers' market checks."

Tracie looks back fondly at her ten years serving on the CWA Board in every position, including President in 2013-14. She also served on various State WIC Committees. Although retired since June, Tracie hopes to work with WIC in some future capacity. For now, she'll volunteer as an elementary school reading tutor and a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteer, helping foster children who've landed in the court system through no fault of their own. In WIC or this next life chapter, Tracie will continue toward her goal to serve children.

"Getting to know other WIC Directors, CWA staff and State WIC staff helped me become a much more effective WIC leader. WIC works best when the local agencies, our State program and CWA work together."

—Tracie Barrow

Magdalene Louie, Retired

After a 34-year career with WIC, Magdalene Louie retired last June from **City & County of San Francisco WIC**. Magdalene started out working in several part-time nutrition positions at **Alameda County WIC** for over 10 years. With San Francisco County WIC since 1994, she's been a site supervisor/nutritionist and WIC Program Coordinator. She



volunteered on several state-level committees over the years, supporting nutrition education, food package implementation, and food policy. Locally, Magdalene collaborated on many projects to improve the health and well-being of families, focusing on lead exposure, immunization, smoking cessation, dental health, nurse-family partnership, family planning, and

many more. She enjoyed her first month of retirement with "nothing scheduled" — just enjoying walks, hikes, and meals with friends and family. Given her active time with WIC, we're sure she'll be up to more good things soon.

A number of dedicated WIC colleagues have retired since last spring. CWA thanks them for their service to California WIC and wishes them well in the future!



Judith Dunaway, promoted

Now oversees WIC as Health Promotion and Policy Development Division Manager *City of Pasadena*



Peggy Redfern, retired
Tulare County

CWA President 2010-11; CWA Regional Rep 2008-09



Peter Schlichting, retired
Mendocino County



Twila Sanchez, retired
United Indian Health Services

In Memoriam

Genny Maling

California WIC was sad to lose a dedicated colleague last May, when Genny Maling, WIC Director at **Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center**, unexpectedly passed away



after a short illness. Genny's extended family traveled here from the Philippines for a memorial service in late May. Genny will be greatly missed by her WIC staff and colleagues who appreciated her long-time leadership and friendship.

CWA's New Look

We have been busy redesigning our website this fall, to give it a fresh look and provide you with easier ways to find the information you need — especially on mobile devices. We expect to launch soon! Watch the Flash e-news for more information. We hope you enjoy our new look and easier access!

www.calwic.org



Recently Recertified Well WIC Worksites

Since our last WIC Watch, three local WIC agencies have recertified as Well WIC Worksites. CWA commends their achievements and hopes their stories will inspire you to reinvigorate your WWW efforts! Get even more inspiration here: <http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksite-wellness>

SDSU Research Foundation

SDSU Research Foundation WIC has focused this year on each of the six dimensions of wellness — occupational, physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional — two months at a time. Here, we highlight a few activities.



Physical: Healthy potlucks with themes like Meatless Mondays and Eating a Rainbow add fun to workday lunch-times. Want to create your own Rainbow Grain Bowl Potluck Party? Use their colorful sign-up template posted on CWA’s WWW Agency Sharing Center webpage: <http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksite-wellness/agency-sharing-center>



Staff-created posters list fruits, vegetables, nutrients, and health benefits of each rainbow color.

Even though one SDSU WIC clinic has only two staff, that’s all it takes to motivate each other to stay fit. Outside of work, one employee goes to the gym on weekdays while the other restarted her regular walking routine. At work, they often take walking breaks together and keep each other accountable.

Social: Provided with craft supplies, administrative employees created a scrapbook page featuring a favorite recipe and the reason they chose to share it. The results? Fun, creativity, cooking inspiration, and a new way to get to know each other!



Occupational: Spending time outdoors in nature is healthy, but did you know that bringing nature indoors in the form of live office plants can also relieve stress, boost mood, and increase productivity?

Intellectual: The WWW Coordinator attended a workshop with speakers on mindfulness, listening, safety in employee wellness programs, financial awareness.

She then shared the highlights with her colleagues at SDSU.

Riverside

After another three years as a Well WIC Worksite, Riverside University Health Systems WIC recertified for the third time by doing their best to stand for and promote wellness to staff. They primarily focus on communicating resources through monthly newsletters focused on nutrition or health topics staff can apply to their current lives. A healthy recipe and wellness topics accompany updates that share wellness news among the sites.

Riverside employees also promote physical activity at quarterly in-service training and walking breaks to get moving. They always look for ways to reward staff for making positive changes to boost their health and wellbeing, including Wellness Certificates to staff given at in-services and other incentives when available.

Recertification always requires continuing education. One Nutritionist attended a CWA Annual Conference concurrent workshop about added sugars, and later presented what she learned to colleagues at her local agency.



Neighborhood WIC office employees celebrate their wellness achievements at the RUHS Nutrition Services & Health Promotion annual event.

Santa Barbara County WIC

Santa Barbara County WIC has a long wellness track record, hosting regular healthy potlucks and salad bars and more. To recertify this time, they added some new strategies.

Fitness Fridays: Lompoc WIC staff started Fitness Fridays, where all WIC employees wear work-out clothing on alternate Fridays when the office is closed. Employees walk more frequently during breaks because of their attire, even doing squats or planks in the breakroom at lunch. And when they bring healthy breakfast or lunch items and have a potluck, eating together boosts morale and fosters healthy relationships among staff. All sites plan to adopt Fitness Fridays within the next year.

Walking Challenge: WIC and the entire County Public Health Department participate in a yearly walking challenge using *Walkadoo* (<https://walkadoo.meyouhealth.com>). For this friendly competition, each WIC office forms one or two teams of five; nearly all WIC employees participate even though it's optional. Every team member gets a free FitBit to track steps daily for 6 weeks, whether walking, running, hiking, or dancing then logs their steps at www.challengerunner.com.



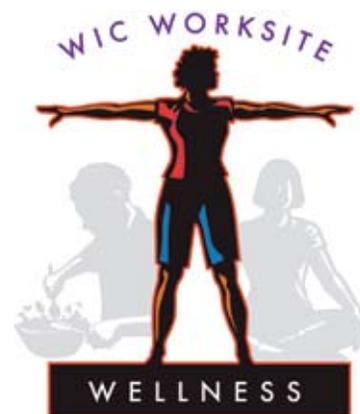
Pumping is encouraged at all-staff meetings; these new moms made pumping a group activity at a recent meeting break!

Family Support: Santa Barbara WIC has a lot of resources to support WIC and Public Health Department employees who are new moms. Besides a lactation room just for staff, any employee who breastfeeds is issued a high-quality breast pump. And, knowing how important work-life balance is for staff morale and wellness, Santa Barbara WIC allows employees to bring their baby or children to work when needed.

Positivity & Customer Service: SBPH has recently focused on internal and external customer service and cultivating a can-do, positive attitude among staff and with participants. Following a discussion within their inter-agency continuous quality improvement (CQI) committee, they booked Jean Steel as a guest speaker for their yearly all-staff meeting. Jean was a plenary presenter at a previous CWA Annual Conference. At *Happy People Win*, Jean helps individuals find balance and harmony to promote a positive state of mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.



The Lompoc WIC site staff shows us how Fitness Fridays go down!





California WIC Association

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Save the Dates

California Breastfeeding Summit

January 29-31 • Anaheim, CA
californiabreastfeeding.org

NWA Leadership Conference

March 3-5 • Wash. DC • nwica.org

CWA Annual Conference & Trade Show

April 28-May 1 • San Diego
calwic.org/events

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Read this and past issues of the WIC Watch online at
<http://calwic.org/news-a-publications/wic-watch>.



Share the link with colleagues, family & friends!

"I'm giving this place 5 stars! I'm currently 13 weeks pregnant and have no idea what I'm doing LOL. My cousin told me about WIC and I thought I wouldn't qualify. I thought I needed an appointment. So I walked in and the front desk [person] greeted me... gave me paperwork to fill out and said someone would call me. [The woman who] called was so helpful. I didn't feel rushed and she answered all my questions. Went above and beyond for me - I even cried at her desk. Then I sat with a nutritionist. Wow! She knew about vegetarian options and took her time with me and I felt better than at my doctor's office. I walked out so grateful to know that there are still people out there who truly care about others and have a passion for what they do. I honestly feel like I have more knowledge and a support system. Thank you sooo much from me and baby E!"

— Excerpt from a Yelp review for PHFE WIC, October 2018

