Harnessing the Power of Collaboration

WIC serves 60% of infants born in California.” What kind of response do you get when you tell people this? Do they ask you to repeat that statistic so they can make sure they heard you correctly? You may experience such an incredulous response from community partners and decision makers who don’t yet understand California WIC’s services and scope of reach.

Yes, we have a great responsibility and opportunity to impact the health of low-income young families, who are often most at risk for chronic disease and experience the greatest health disparities. There has never been a time with more potential for WIC to excel as a key partner providing support for improved nutrition, physical activity and breastfeeding.

Health care reform is being built on concepts of prevention, quality improvement, collaboration and innovation. As a program, WIC has always been about prevention, with 40 years’ experience in quality improvement. Collaboration is how WIC agencies maximize resources and build reliable community safety nets. There’s a physical infrastructure of hundreds of local WIC clinics in every county in California, and the largest public health workforce of nutrition and breastfeeding experts. No wonder WIC is the logical partner for innovative models of delivery for preventive services and workforce development with public and private partners!
Welcome to the 23rd Annual CWA Conference and Trade Show! This year’s theme, *Plugged In: Harnessing the Power of Collaboration*, encourages us to focus on improving our knowledge and skills to better utilize collective resources and partnerships.

We hope this conference inspires you to undertake strategic and innovative efforts to ensure that the WIC program impacts health outcomes and reduces health disparities in our communities. During this historic time of reform — with health systems adopting the Triple Aim: improved health, better care, and reduced cost — WIC is a key partner in promoting health equity.

Be sure to share the ideas, inspiration and resources you find here in the San Francisco Bay Area with your colleagues back home.

**TWO PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS** provide continuing education on Sunday to invigorate your professional practice:

- Marsha Walker and Laurel Wilson will guide attendees through an intensive four-workshop Clinical Breastfeeding Day, covering anatomy & physiology of breasts, suck dysfunction, evidence-based solutions for delayed lactogenesis and other breastfeeding problems.

- The folks from Be Present, Inc., will take attendees through proven processes for Leading Collaboratively at the Intersection of Race, Gender, Class & Power.

**PLENARY SPEAKERS** share their energy and experiences on Monday and Wednesday:

- Leadership Coach Rick VanDermyden challenges us to lead through change by Connecting, Collaborating and Communicating with our teams to impact our communities.

- Sasha Hernandez, The Resource Connection, Brandi Gates, West Oakland Health Center, and Pamela Martinez, Toiyabe Indian Health Project, speak from the heart about why **WIC Makes Sense**.

- Dr. Robert Emmons of UC Davis explores with us **The Science and Application of Gratitude**.
• Dr. Connie Mitchell, Deputy Director, Center for Family Health, CDPH, outlines the Social Determinants of Family Health and new ways to integrate these in working with young families.

• Robert Lee, National WIC Association, and a Men and Dads at WIC panel — Muswamba Mwamba, Fidel Garcia, and Torey Carrick — make the case for engaging dads and partners at WIC while respecting cultural and environmental realities.

• Christine Nelson, California WIC Director, Jesus Mendoza, USDA Western Region, Rev. Douglas Greenaway, National WIC Association, Karen Farley and Laurie True, CWA, will provide program and policy updates at state and federal levels.

FIVE CONCURRENT WORKSHOP TRACKS
are designed to bring topical expertise right to you:
• Breastfeeding & Early Feeding
• Nutrition & Healthy Living
• Leadership & Wellness
• Cultural Diversity & Collaboration
• Additional Sessions

Conference attendees can engage with top speakers on a variety of topics, such as:
• Jeannette Panchula, on cue-based bottle feeding and Jane Heinig, on toddler behavior & feeding
• Vanessa Annibali, on breastfeeding taboos and Patty Novak, on children with special needs
• Patty Novak, on neurological disorders and Monique Sims, on faith-based family support
• Manuel Villacorta, on anti-aging superfoods and Jo Ann Hattner, on probiotic foods
• Ernie Navarro, on leadership and Arlene Taylor, on communicating effectively

Plus more insights from our pre-conference and plenary presenters and panels, on breastfeeding ethics & epigenetics, teamwork, and involving fathers

Whichever track you choose, be sure and take back to your colleagues new knowledge, tools, and best practices for integrating cultural sensitivity, leadership and wellness in your work together.

THE TRADE SHOW & EXHIBITS, featuring nearly 50 booths, give you a chance to see, feel, taste, and try out new foods, clinical products, and publications from industry reps. You can also learn about key government programs and nonprofit services, all while networking with your colleagues and partners. Don’t forget to connect with your WIC peers at Local Agency Sharing Exhibits, concurrent with the Trade Show, and learn about wellness, customer service, and other ways to improve your program.

SPECIAL EVENTS include Tuesday evening’s California Nutrition Corps (CNC) Reception, where we’ll not only “Meet the Future” as we recognize our CNC scholarship winners and WIC Dietetic Interns, but we’ll have some mind-blowing fun with mentalist Adrian Saint.

Many of you practice WIC Worksite Wellness at your own worksites, and keeping fit and alert at the conference should be no different. Rise and shine with Yoga in the morning, and Move to the Groove at lunch. Wednesday’s Waterfront Walk & Run for Fun will be a blast for teams and individuals. Finally, we look forward to honoring seven local agencies certified this year as Well WIC Worksites.

NEXT STEPS: If you couldn’t join us this year, visit the CWA conference web page to download select presentation materials, available only through May. Then, plan to join us at the 2016 Annual Conference & Trade Show, April 17–20, 2016. We’ll be back at the Town & Country Resort in San Diego for more great education, networking, and recharging!
Meet Our Staff!

We’ve introduced the CWA staff below, so you know who to reach out to with your questions or ideas. We’re eager to use our years of expertise to serve YOU, the California WIC local agency employees. Be sure to say hello if you see us at Conference!

Karen Farley, RD, IBCLC, Executive Director, has been with CWA since 2002. She focuses her relationship-building skills and passion for partnerships, advocacy, and training on working for health care reform, breastfeeding support, and WIC innovations. When not at work, she enjoys spending time with her family, including tending their large garden with fruit trees.

Lena Workman, Administrator since 2005, handles CWA’s administrative and financial operations, andwhips together the Conference program and other publications as needed. She enjoys the outdoors when it is neither too hot nor too cold and relatively bug-free. She has a general distaste for frogs and toads.

Laurie True, MPH, Strategic Advisor, helps out part-time with strategic advice and grants management. She was CWA’s Director from 1999-2014, and is now creating a public health advocacy training program at UC Berkeley’s School of Public Health. In between, she hikes with friends and family, tries to grow vegetables, and spoils her two small dogs.

Donna Hoffman, Program Coordinator since 2010, manages the WIC Ambassador Program and grassroots advocacy campaigns like WIC Makes Sense. A CLEC training graduate, she oversees conference workshop selection and works closely with Karen on State and Federal policy issues. Outside work, Donna enjoys travel, photography, cooking, and being with 9-month-old son Theo!

Meghan Saddler, Administrative Coordinator since 2011, handles event registrations, bills & checks, mail & phones, answers lots of questions, and takes care of odds & ends in general. She is kept on her toes with a toddler at home and could be considered the Crazy Cat Lady of the office. She inspires us with her daily walks.

Margaret Aumann, MPH, RD, Communications Coordinator since 2011, edits the CWA Flash e-newsletter, compiles the WIC Watch magazine, maintains the website and WIC Can Help campaign, hosts webinars, co-manages WIC Worksite Wellness, and is studying to become a CLEC. She likes to swim, hike, bike, and make music – with or without her two college-age kids.

Teresa Morris, Conference Planning Consultant and with CWA since 2010, plans and manages the Annual Conference & Trade Show and Fall Management Conference. When she’s not acting as our “Ace Organizer,” she enjoys keeping active, cooking, volunteering, and spending time with her family.
**Thank You, Laurie True**

This year marks a big transition for CWA, the WIC community and our partners, as Laurie True steps down as Executive Director to focus on working with our future leaders. While she will remain at CWA for 2015 as Strategic Advisor, Laurie will be working with public health graduate students at UC Berkeley as they learn to be strong advocates and leaders.

Laurie brought extensive experience in hunger prevention advocacy when she joined CWA, then a fledgling non-profit, 14 years ago. Since then CWA has built capacity and gained reputation as a state and national advocacy organization, working to protect the WIC program and participants and reduce health inequities for young, low-income families.

We are deeply grateful for the ways Laurie has contributed on many fronts at the helm of CWA. She has worked diligently to protect WIC program services, advocated on behalf of local agencies, and provided expert analysis and testimony on program quality, cost containment, and integrity. A policy strategist with long-range vision, Laurie was instrumental in crafting and shaping multiple strategies that improved breastfeeding outcomes in California. Laurie has been a resource for state and national hunger and equity advocates and always strives to ‘connect the dots’ and maximize our collective resources.

We have much to be thankful for as we know that, in her new position, Laurie will give her students the best possible experience and guidance as they develop skills and join us in the workplace, becoming our next generation of leaders.

*Laurie and CWA staff celebrate Well WIC Worksite certification at the 2013 Annual Conference.*
Cultural Traditions in Breastfeeding
Northeast Valley Health Corporation

Over the years, WIC staff at NEVHC in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys had observed several breastfeeding moms with different cultural backgrounds following eating patterns believed to increase breastmilk supply. Staff wanted to learn more about these practices and how to counsel these women appropriately.

So the CSU Northridge/NEVHC WIC Dietetic Interns designed an in-service training on different breastfeeding cultures and the foods believed to increase breastmilk supply, to identify similarities among all countries and help staff create an action plan to promote breastfeeding globally.

Four Interns researched and presented about infant mortality and breastfeeding rates, key people who influence breastfeeding decisions, cultural beliefs around breastfeeding, and recipes for foods believed to increase milk supply for eight countries: Ghana, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Israel, Philippines, Mexico, and Armenia. In true participant-centered fashion, they included food samples and hands-on activity.

Most importantly, they concluded with tips for culturally-sensitive counseling, including motivational interviewing, withholding judgment, and avoiding pushing one’s own cultural beliefs. Their advice to “be sensitive to cultural practices by incorporating the foods they believe to increase milk supply but tailoring it if necessary” makes sense. Acting on strongly-held beliefs and following cultural traditions can give the breastfeeding mother confidence and comfort, even if the practices aren’t proven to increase milk supply.

For more information, contact Erin Manlulu: ErinManlulu@nevhc.org.
**Local Agency News**

**Smart Tech Marketing & Participant Education**

**San Bernardino County Public Health**

Throughout the past two years, San Bernardino County Department of Public Health WIC expanded and improved their infrastructure for delivering participant-centered education and marketing, focusing on technology in three main ways:

1. On their updated webpage, participants (at over 10,000 visits per month!) can make appointments or apply for benefits, get news about WIC nutrition campaigns, and easily access information about WIC services. Visitors can also connect via new and ongoing social media platforms.

2. All classrooms and staff cubicles have the technology to offer education through a variety of electronic media—such as PowerPoint slideshows, videos, and YouTube clips—designed to provide tailored nutrition education messages. At prenatal visits, for example, staff offers each participant a menu of education delivery options (group, individual, or online) and a selection of lesson topics. Staff will click on the topic chosen and launch the corresponding education presentation.

3. Videos produced in-house, including some that feature their own WIC participants, are shown in clinic lobbies and on their YouTube platform and website. The videos cover educational topics, promotional topics, and WIC events.

Their goals? To increase exclusive breastfeeding rates and build opportunities for education, trust, and better connections with WIC families. Check out their website at [www.SBCounty.gov/wic](http://www.SBCounty.gov/wic) or contact Monica Haag (mhaag@dph.sbcounty.gov) or James Marin (Jame.Marin@dph.sbcounty.gov) for more information.

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**Breastfeeding Training for the Fun of It**

**United Health Centers**

If you “have” to do something, you might as well have fun with it, right? That’s what United Health Centers (UHC) WIC decided in 2012 as they prepared to offer the required seven hours of breastfeeding training under the theme, “It’s all about the Gold.” That year, a “California Gold Rush” theme influenced decorations, costumes, and training presentation delivery.

Staff evaluations revealed that employees were not only enthusiastic about the experience, but wanted more! So in 2014, a “Mexican Fiesta” tied in Mexico’s gold production, along with breastfeeding rates and struggles, and how that may impact UHC WIC participants. Staff sang a lactation song to Mariachi music and ate a delicious catered Mexican lunch.

To create a fun training event, UHC staff use the acronym FUN, of course!

**F** = Find a metaphor or connection.

**U** = Utilize resources.

**N** = Note ideas from staff talents and interests, party ideas and community events.

Each year employee evaluations help shape the topic and “excursion” for the following year. This August, staff is already thinking about costumes, decorations and learning about the topics that they suggested for an “African Safari.”

For 2016, will staff vote for an “Alaskan Cruise,” “Hollywood Superheroes” or “Thailand’s Floating Market? Who knows, but it’ll be FUN! For further information or ideas, contact Kathleen Harriss: harrissk@unitedhealthcenters.org.
Legislative Update

WIC Reauthorization Needs YOU!

Congress will reauthorize the WIC Program in 2015, as it does every 5 years, providing an opportunity to make program improvements. CWA is partnering with National WIC Association on aligning the list of asks for program improvements. Ideas include serving children up to age six years, preconception health support, and innovative partnerships. Visit http://calwic.org/policy-center/federal for materials in months to come.

What’s the most important action you can take now? Host your elected representatives and their staff for a visit to your clinic. Many legislators don’t realize the need for WIC services in their districts, or that WIC provides nutrition and breastfeeding support in addition to healthy foods. They don’t realize the positive impact on the retail environment from the WIC food package. Your first step is to simply make a phone call to your representative’s office and invite them. Plan to make this call by May 30. Questions? Contact Donna at dhoffman@calwic.org.

WIC Makes Sense Campaign

CWA needs your help with WIC Makes Sense, a straightforward education campaign directed at decision makers during the 2015 WIC Reauthorization period. Like past efforts on the new food package rollout and We Need WIC campaigns, we will ask for your help collecting comments or short videos from participants, staff and community members about why WIC Makes Sense for families and communities. In the upcoming months, CWA will make available simple materials and ideas for collecting comments about the vital services WIC provides. Stay tuned!

State Budget Surplus and Bills

Governor Brown made it clear when he began his historic fourth term this year with a good problem — a budget surplus — that he would focus on debt reduction and targeted obligations. Despite signs of a recovering economy, the Golden State remains among the worst in the nation for poverty at 23%, especially for children. Plus safety net programs for children and families are still seriously impacted by drastic cuts from 2007-09. Child and family advocates are focusing efforts this year on strategically rebuilding key programs as poverty reduction measures.

CWA will follow a number of bills addressing poverty and health equity. Check for updates on our State Policy page at http://calwic.org/policy-center/state or contact Donna at dhoffman@calwic.org.

Welch’s is proud to be a Gold Sponsor of the California WIC Association’s 2015 Annual Conference!
Scholarship News

2014-2015 California Nutrition Corps Scholarship Winners

CWA congratulates all winners, with sincere thanks to General Mills for their ongoing support. All are Dietetic Interns, except where noted.

American Red Cross WIC San Diego
Nare Davoodi
Qiaoling Gong, Stefan Harvey Award

Butte County Public Health
Carrie Percy

Contra Costa County
Anamarie Orgera

Indian Health Care Center of Santa Clara
Lauren Gendler (Graduate)

Inland Behavioral Health Services
Sha-Knecia Payne (Graduate)

Northeast Valley Health Center
Christy Helvestine
Ruben Vargas

PHFE
Brooke Adams
Wendy Ceja-Garcia, Anne Garrett Memorial Award
Audrey Cristales
Esmeralda Garcia, Anne Peterson Memorial Award
Sarah Getachew, General Mills Award
Valerie Ward (Undergraduate)

Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties
Cristina Pessegueiro, General Mills Award

Riverside County
Stacey Doolin
San Diego State University Research Foundation
Edgar Gomez (Undergraduate)
Caitlin Jackson

Scripps Mercy
Jaime Rangel

Stanislaus County
Keirnin Harris

United Health Centers
Rana Eghtesadi
City of Long Beach WIC Gets Leaner & Meaner

“Exhausted, restless, and over nourished” is how the City of Long Beach WIC employees described their wellness status prior to December 2013. Then began their journey toward improving team attitudes and behaviors for optimal health, with over 71 percent of team members indicating their readiness to take steps in that direction!

Team members started bringing healthier foods for potlucks, lunches and snacks, with salad often the main meal. Each of five sites designated a team member as the “Wellness Angel” to keep staff motivated, provide fruit and vegetable snacks for gatherings, and spearhead group walks or stretch breaks.

Movement for fitness is now the norm at each team meeting. The Healthy WIC Buck Program helps catch people in the act of making healthy choices. Staff can join an after-work walking club or yoga/meditation hour.

International City Bank Marathon and Half Marathon, Relay for Life, and the 5th Annual Orange County Walk for Water!

Many employees developed personal wellness goals for 2014. Their “U Above All - In It to Thin It” weight loss program motivated 75% of team members to pursue healthier eating and more activity. Over seven months, they lost a total of 107 pounds!

During Public Health Week last April (this year’s is April 6-10), the entire WIC Team led other Health Department staff in the annual 2.5 mile Hill Challenge. They say, “We are now a LEANER and MEANER force to reckon with!” Motivational wellness quotes, newsletters, and wellness segments during meetings keep staff excited to be a part of the WIC Worksite Wellness family.

Community Medical Centers WIC: Helping Each Other Out

Long before earning Well WIC Worksite certification in November 2014, Community Medical Centers, Inc. WIC had been promoting employee health and wellness. Keeping the momentum of activities once started with enthusiasm isn’t always easy, yet CMC WIC has maintained walking and workout groups over the last few years. Groups of staff take neighborhood walks around their WIC sites during break time. And those wanting to take it up a notch join in a 30-minute group strength training class during lunch several days a week.

CMC’s Worksite Wellness team has initiated some fun and exciting activities, including staff potlucks, a delicious homemade salsa tasting contest, and professional salsa dance instruction at an all-staff meeting. Each month, Wellness Coordinators Myrna Rosales and Andrea Weiss post health topics in the break room, with recipes, health screening and exercise information.

One special way that staff helps each other achieve wellness goals is through dietitian-led support groups. Plus, any staff interested in taking her personal wellness to the next level is paired with a Registered Dietitian on staff, who helps her along the journey to achieve goals ranging from weight loss to incorporating more veggies into her diet. They all know that goals are much more easily attained with help and support from friends and family.
Wellness is Contagious in Solano County

Solano County WIC is one of a few local WWW programs that has influenced its parent organization to embrace worksite wellness. Presentations by the WIC Director to the Board of Supervisors, yearly wellness challenges, and a Kaiser grant moved the county to recently hire a worksite wellness coordinator to bring physical activity, stress management, and healthy eating opportunities to all county employees. Partnering with Kaiser, the county offers yearly health screenings at work and an online health assessment. Some WIC employees have even won cash prizes for participating!

Since WIC promotes healthy eating and physical activity by design, WIC employees were often the ones to present wellness information to all employees even before county-wide wellness was in place. After committing to become a Well WIC Worksite, however, wellness became a consistent focus throughout their work.

Surveys revealed staff’s interest in personal health and a willingness to make changes, from the type of foods and beverages available and exercise breaks offered at staff meetings to personal habits. More teams go for walks or use exercise DVDs during lunch and breaks. Dietetic interns create a quarterly wellness newsletter with short articles on physical activity, nutrition, stress management and a healthy recipe.

Staff meeting presentations about disease complications and management made employees more aware of diabetes and obesity and their own risks or condition. Several WIC workers successfully lost weight after years of trying, thanks to coworkers’ encouragement and support and a Weight Watchers discount. As many Well WIC Worksites have discovered, this kind of environment makes wellness positively contagious!

Keep the Momentum!

If your agency has been a certified Well WIC Worksite for at least three years, it’s time to recertify! This process is much less involved than the initial certification, yet shows your continued commitment to nurturing employee health. Kudos to Planned Parenthood WIC and San Bernardino County WIC for recertifying since last fall! There are 11 more agencies who qualify, including a few that need to fulfill just one more requirement. Complete and submit the recertification form found on the CWA website, or call Margaret or Meghan at 530-750-2280 with your questions.
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2015 - 2016

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Tell Your Story & Share Your Success!

We’re now publishing the WIC Watch just twice a year. Send us your agency’s article ideas, photos, and best practices any time, and by September 4, 2015 for the Fall Edition.

Save the Date

ENACT DAY
May 6, 2015
State Capitol • Sacramento

CWA FALL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE
October (dates TBD) • Sacramento

2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
April 17-20, 2016
Town & Country Resort • San Diego

Get Ready for ENACT Day 2015

Instead of hosting our own WIC & Breastfeeding Information & Education Day this year, CWA will join the Prevention Institute’s Strategic Alliance for ENACT Day on May 6. ENACT (Environmental Nutrition and Activity Community Tool) Day brings community residents, youth, and local organizations together in the State Capital to focus on education and advocacy around food, physical activity, and health equity. Stay tuned for more information in the CWA Flash e-newsletter and on our website at www.calwic.org/policy/state.