

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and Summary Notes

Agenda Items:

- National Updates
- Breastfeeding Data During Formula Shortage – Marcia
- Infant Formula Updates – Jessie
- Social Media Update – Megan
- UAT Update – Tami
- Early Childhood Screening: Minnesota Department of Education – Guest Speaker Margo Chresand – Early Childhood Specialist

National Updates- Kate

Public Health Emergency Declaration Extended Again

January 11, 2023, the PHE declaration related to the COVID-19 pandemic was again extended by the US Department of Health and Human Services. This means the PHE currently goes through mid-April 2023 and the federal WIC waivers are in place for 90 days after the PHE expires (July 2023). [RENEWAL OF DETERMINATION THAT A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXISTS](#).

USDA Announced Final Extension of Infant Formula Flexibilities

In late December, USDA released guidance announcing a planned transition away from infant formula flexibilities and back to normal program operations, providing a final extension of waivers allowing states to provide non-contract formulas through February 27, 2023. USDA indicated that, absent a significant change in circumstance prior to these waivers ending, state WIC agencies will be expected to return to only providing formula from each state's contract manufacturer starting March 1, 2023. Recognizing that there may continue to be disruptions in infant formula supplies, USDA has extended waiver authorities allowing for the redemption of WIC benefits for alternate products and container sizes from contract manufacturers through April 30, and waivers allowing for flexibilities in hypoallergenic and specialty formulas through June 30, 2023. This information was shared with local agencies in the December 28th WIC Weekly Update and can be found at: [Formula Waivers Update](#).

USDA Food Package Updates – Share Your Comments

[Submit Comments on the WIC Food Package to USDA](#) to let USDA know your thoughts on the proposed WIC Food Package changes. You can view comments already submitted at: [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\): Revisions in the WIC Food Packages](#).

The National WIC Association has prepared this resource [Updates to the WIC Food Packages](#) to support you in crafting your comments, as well as [WIC Food Package Rule Comments Social Media Toolkit](#) to spread the word. Comments are due by February 21, 2023. **Please note that submitting a public comment is NOT a lobbying activity.**

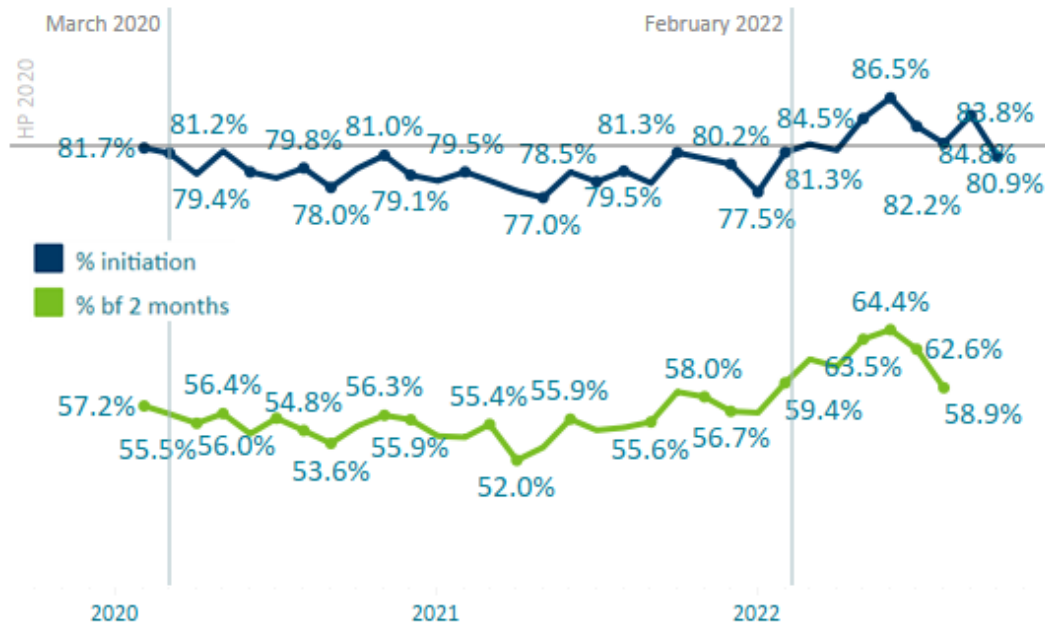
Other Program Updates

Breastfeeding Data During Formula Shortage - Marcia

Coming soon: a web page that will report breastfeeding trends monthly (statewide) and quarterly (by location or race and ethnicity) for infants that certify within 60 days of birth. Breastfeeding initiation declined slowly over 2020 and 2021. There was a spike in initiation beginning in February 2022, likely due to the formula shortage, with rates coming back down later in the year. Also, during this same time period, the percentage of infants fed formula in the hospital declined.

Monthly Breastfeeding Rates for MN WIC Participants

certified within 60 days of birth



HP 2020: Healthy People 2020 goal: 81.9% initiation

Infant Formula Updates– Jessie

There is a multi-staged approach to return formula use to contract products nationally as waivers expire:

1. **February 27, 2023 is the last day in MN to guarantee purchase of substitutes outside the product listed on the benefits.** Infants on milk-based Enfamil contract products and Isomil soy fed infants will no longer be allowed to select anything but the contract brand or alternative size. The 27th of February allows 1-2 days for all stores to pick up the new APL by March 1st when the waiver expires. Depending on when a store refreshes the APL they may or may not be able to get noncontract substitutes still on 2/28.
2. **During March 1 - April 30, 2023, select alternative sizes of the contract formula will remain temporarily allowed.** The list of these alternatives will be posted ~February 21, 2023, to help families as they shop during the March and April months.
3. **After May 1, 2023, families will only be allowed to purchase the exact contract product listed on the benefits, no substitutes or alternative sizes allowed.**
4. **June 30, 2023 is the final day medical formula substitutes will be allowed.**

Social Media Update – Megan

Minnesota WIC is now on Facebook and Instagram.

[Minnesota WIC \(facebook.com\)](https://www.facebook.com/MNWIC) (facebook.com/MNWIC)

[MN WIC \(@minnesotawic\)](https://www.instagram.com/minnesotawic) • [Instagram photos and videos \(@minnesotawic\)](https://www.instagram.com/minnesotawic)

These new pages will give us dedicated MN WIC social media channels with helpful information and resources for participants and allows us to post content more frequently. We plan to create our own content, share National WIC Association content, and amplify posts from your local agency or county pages and partner organizations.

An app notification went out Jan. 17 to participants, and the following for each social media channel is in the early stages of growth.

Thank you to local agencies who have already followed and shared our initial posts. We encourage local agencies to point participants to our new social media channels and follow the new social media pages.

UAT Update – Tami

Round 1 of UAT for WINNIE was complete on 11/11/22. CDP has been working to fix defects and round 2 is set to start on 4/3/23. After round 2 of UAT has started we will provide a tentative pilot and rollout plan. Dakota will start the first phase of the pilot tentatively on 9/12/23. Watch the WINNIE the Scoop for additional information.

Early Childhood Screening: Minnesota Department of Education Guest Speaker: Margo Chresand - Early Childhood Screening Specialist

Margo presented on the importance of Early Childhood Screening, shared suggested ways to discuss with families and links for supporting materials. She shared a copy of her presentation. If you would like a copy, please reach out to your consultant.

Questions & Answers

Formula

How does this formula flexibility end affect medical formulas?

We are not certain how the waivers expiring and a return to contract products will affect medical formulas. However, we do suspect production of some medical formulas may be impacted as the major manufacturers ramp up production to ensure contract formula is sufficient in the states that hold the contract(s).

Is the deadline for the current formula substitution list Feb 27th or 28th?

MN will be deactivating all the non-contract substitutes the evening of Feb 27, 2023 and the APL will update with stores either the early morning of Feb 28th or March 1, 2023, depending on the store process. For example, on March 1, a family with Enfamil Infant will only be able to purchase Enfamil Infant or larger cans of Enfamil Infant or Enfamil Neuropro Infant. These select additional contract product sizes will only be allowed through April 30, 2023.

If they have Similac on their benefits that started 2/20/23, will they be able to purchase Similac on 3/1/23. Is 2/27 the last day we can issue or the last day they can purchase in the store?

We actually are not changing the issuance of any infants as they should already be getting milk-based Enfamil formula or soy based Similac Isomil products per the contract change in October 2022. Regardless of what they have on their benefits, the last day to guarantee substitutes outside their contract brand is February 27, 2023. Based on when the APL is updated at the store, a few families may be able to still purchase substitutes one extra day through February 28, 2023 but this is not guaranteed.

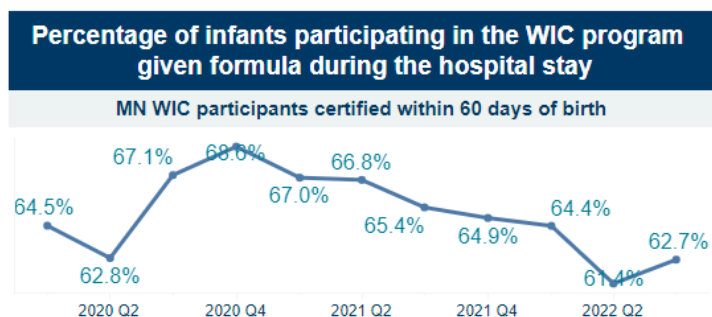
Can you repeat - did you say medical substitutes are through 5/1?

June 30, 2023 is the final day medical formula substitutes will be allowed.

Breastfeeding

Marcia, are the quarters based off of the calendar year or the FFY? Yes, all the public breastfeeding reports use calendar year.

Did you say that you had a drop in infants getting formula in the hospital during the formula shortage, Marcia? Yes, the percentage of infants getting formula in the hospital dipped in Spring 2022.



When will this be on the website?

Hopefully it'll be up next week, along with the breastfeeding by race/AOIC reports. I'm hoping as I do more of these, I won't need so many approvals.

UAT

Do you know who the additional 2 pilot programs are for WINNIE? – Waiting for confirmation on the tentative dates for the 2 additional pilots. We will share when we provide the tentative schedule.

CVB

Will we have to continue to change the cash value amount for F/V or will it be changed to the higher amount since we know we have this through Sept 2023? Until the change is made permanent, we will not add it to the default food prescriptions in HuBERT.

HuBERT

HuBERT has been painfully slow for us lately, especially in the benefits issuance screen. Any others experiencing this as well? Any reason behind this? HuBERT is just slow in general due to all the various components it checks for accuracy. The speed is checked with each release and hasn't change. Local internet connectivity can have an impact on the speed as well.

Early Childhood Screening

Does the Help Me Grow phone number connect them to Early Childhood Screening as well? Unfortunately, no, they do not connect them with screening, although often Margo will get them eventually.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[RENEWAL OF DETERMINATION THAT A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXISTS](https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/Pages/covid19-11Jan23.aspx)
(<https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/Pages/covid19-11Jan23.aspx>)

[Formula Waivers Update](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/formula/waiversupdt.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/formula/waiversupdt.pdf>)

Submit Comments on the WIC Food Package to USDA

(<https://nwica.salsalabs.org/WICFoodPackageComments/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=788faca4-4537-4db2-bde2-d662478127e9&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=1e485832-8093-4128-8c88-231510cad6c1&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d25d27aa-136c-4016-a90e-eff93643986f>)

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC): Revisions in the WIC Food Packages (<https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FNS-2006-0037/comments>)

Updates to the WIC Food Packages

(https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fs3.amazonaws.com%2Faws.upl%2Fnwica.org%2Fwic%2520food%2520package_template%2520comments.docx%3FFileType%3DEmailBlastContent%26eld%3D788faca4-4537-4db2-bde2-d662478127e9%26eType%3DEmailBlastContent%26eld%3D1e485832-8093-4128-8c88-231510cad6c1%26eType%3DEmailBlastContent%26eld%3Dd25d27aa-136c-4016-a90e-eff93643986f&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

WIC Food Package Rule Comments Social Media Toolkit

(<https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/wic-food-package-comments-toolkit.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=d25d27aa-136c-4016-a90e-eff93643986f>)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us; to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.

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