

WIC Local Agency Conference Call

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024, 8:30-9:30 AM

Agenda and summary notes

Agenda items:

- Continuing resolution - Kate
- Introducing Kristen Bricko, Peer Coordinator - Tina
- Outage update/WINNIE pilot update - Tami
- Online shopping evaluation and expansion – Rachel/Kate
- Self-checkout - Erin
- Formula update – Rebecca
- Indirect De Minimis rate change to 15% – Rebecca
- Participant advisory group – Tina
- Breastfeeding bonus funds survey - Rosie

Continuing resolution- Kate

Wednesday Oct. 9, Congress passed a short-term continuing resolution, extending federal funding until Dec. 20 and averting a government shutdown. No legislative action is expected in the coming weeks due to election activities, although Congress is expected to resume funding discussions before the end of the year.

Other program updates

Introducing Kristen Bricko, Peer Coordinator – Tina

Kristen joined state WIC office on Oct. 9. She is an RDN, LD, and IBCLC that comes to MDH WIC with 10 years of experience in nutrition and six years providing lactation services, including four years in leadership with the Sherburne County WIC program serving as the WIC coordinator and peer breastfeeding coordinator. She was instrumental in implementing a peer breastfeeding program in Sherburne County and has extensive experience working with interdisciplinary teams, committees, and community partners to promote breastfeeding and support WIC families. Welcome Kristen!

Outage update/WINNIE pilot update – Tami

Last winter/spring servers were moved from Kansas to Texas. This past week there was a fiber line cut outside of the new data center in Texas and there was a failure in the backup process. The issue was researched, and a manual process was done to redirect internet traffic. All information system issues were related to the data center, and the data center is working with Gainwell to confirm the backup process to prevent any future issues.

WINNIE Pilot is in process. There are now more WINNIE users than HuBERT users. If your agency is due to rollout in the next weeks, you should review the WINNIE [Readiness guide](#), and make sure to check connectivity where you will be accessing WINNIE. The instructions ask agencies to either email or call the help desk to confirm your agency has tested connectivity and confirm this has been completed. If you haven't yet, do this as soon as possible!

We are entering week 4 and these resources are available to help provide additional information and help with questions, [WINNIE Transition Guide](#) and [WINNIE User Tips](#) page. Call the help desk with any issues. We use the WINNIE User tips to address common help desk themes or questions coming forward from pilot and agencies that have rolled out.

Online shopping evaluation and expansion – Rachel/Kate

MDH WIC has been internally evaluating the project with reports from data direct since the project began in May 2024. Five reports provide an overview of the project in the following areas, demographics, household (HH) online shopping benefit utilization and transactions. Reports were aggregated to show MN state level data. Data was collected three times in June July and August through a satisfaction survey via text. The data shows that online shoppers are predominately white and English speaking. Online shopping expanded quickly with about 700 HHs in August completing an online order with a total of 3700 HHs that completed orders throughout pilot and 77% of HH online shopped more than once. New online shoppers continue to participate weekly purchasing an average of 8 items in one transaction. Overall, there is a high satisfaction rate with responses showing >90% in the following online shopping areas, foods are easy to find, saves time, easy to pick up order and overall satisfaction with the experience. Common positive themes from survey respondents show that online shopping is convenient, saves time, and is easy. There is a desire to have online shopping at other stores, more clarity around WIC allowed substitutions, and some comments that fruit and vegetable cash value benefits get charged to their bank card.

Kate shares that September concludes the online ordering pilot project. With the success of the pilot, all HyVee stores will now offer WIC online shopping. The five remaining stores in Ramsey, Hennepin, Olmsted, Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur counties have now rolled out. Agencies closest to these stores were provided the YouTube training that was recorded during the pilot along with updated online shopping documents found on the MDH website. If you are interested in learning more, check out the following:

- [Hy-Vee online training](#)
- [WIC Shopping Help](#)

An app notification will be sent out in the coming weeks to participants in counties with Hy-Vee locations. The message will include a link to helpful information about online ordering and an updated message to indicate that online ordering is now at all MN Hy-Vee stores.

Self-checkout – Erin

The weekly update last week announced that Target is now allowing self-checkout with the WIC Card. Target has a shopping item limit. Some stores have a limit of 10 items and others may have 15 items as their limit. To view stores that allow WIC self-checkout transactions, visit our website under, Local Agencies Shopping Support, [Using Self-Checkout with the WIC Card](#). Erin shared a video of the Target self-checkout transaction during the call and will make it available on our website.

Formula update – Rebecca

Large can sizes of Enfamil Gentlease and Reguline are no longer allowed as of yesterday, Oct. 15. Out of caution and delayed production of Enfamil AR, MDH WIC will continue to allow larger cans sizes of Enfamil AR through November 29, 2024. MN WIC will keep the three large can sizes of AR on through this extension to allow families the option to purchase AR in any size available.

We have updated the substitution lists and APL to show Enfamil AR larger can size options on our MDH WIC webpages. Encourage families to call their WIC clinic if they cannot find the Enfamil product listed on their benefits. If your agency is getting multiple calls about a formula out of stock in your area; please reach out to your State WIC Consultant to make us aware of the issue.

Local Agencies can continue to order ANY contract formula through the MDH state WIC office for direct ship if families are unable to find the formula in their community.

Indirect De Minimis rate change to 15% – Rebecca

See the Oct. 9 weekly update [WIC Grant Update on Indirect Cost Rate](#) for information. Please share this with other appropriate staff within your agency.

Participant advisory group – Tina

MDH WIC received funding to support a participant advisory group. The intent is to seek this group's input on topics related to WIC program services. There will be a collaborative approach on discussion topics for the meetings with 8-10 members in the group to allow space and time for conversation. Fifteen applicants expressed interest in participating in this group. Four interviews have been completed so far and we hope to have the first meeting before the end of the year. Members will receive a gift card for their participation.

Breastfeeding bonus funds survey - Rosie

MDH WIC was awarded a breastfeeding performance award. Minnesota's exclusive breastfeeding rates increased 5.6%, the 4th highest increase in the nation! Thank you for the amazing work!! Awards recognize state agencies that significantly improved the rate of fully breastfed infants between fiscal year 2022 and 2023. Bonus funds need to be used by October 2025. Watch for a survey asking for your input on how to use these funds.

Questions & Answers

Are we able to use Mi-Fi to access Winnie at home? We have been having difficulties connecting with these.

It will depend on the connectivity in your area. The MiFi still needs to connect to a signal as well.

Are all the HyVee stores ready and accepting online orders now?

Yes, the new stores are already operational for online ordering.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[WINNIE Readiness guide](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/winnie/readiness.pdf>)

[WINNIE Transition Guide](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/winnie/transition.pdf>)

[WINNIE User Tips](#) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/winnie/usertips.html>)

[Hy-Vee Online Training](#) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2pkb9Zvovo>)

[WIC Shopping Help](#) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/shopforwic/index.html>)

[Using Self-Checkout with the WIC Card](#) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/selfcheckout.html>)

[WIC Grant Update on Indirect Cost Rate](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/wu/2024/indirectcostrate.pdf>)

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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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