

MARWIC

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MID-ATLANTIC REGION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

UNITY HEALTH CARE WIC PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH GREATER DC DIAPER BANK

By Daisha Hammel, BS, CPPA

Washington, DC's Unity Health Care WIC Program has partnered with the Greater DC Diaper Bank since September of 2022. As a result, Unity Health Care WIC staff have distributed over 42,600 diapers to local DC families! This effort is led by Unity WIC Nutritionist Daisha Hammel. She places monthly diaper orders from the Greater DC Diaper Bank then collects and distributes the orders between Unity's four WIC clinic sites.

The diaper donations come in all sizes, including pull-ups, and can be given to anyone in need. Parents are allotted up to 50 diapers per child per month. WIC also partners with Greater DC Diaper Bank's Baby Pantry. This partnership gives Unity WIC access to wipes, pacifiers, and toiletries for both adults and children and includes feminine hygiene products. Overall, both distribution programs have been very successful with Unity WIC families. The diaper supply is often empty by mid-month, and moms look forward to being able to pick up these necessities every month.

Unity Health Care's WIC staff promote these programs alongside Unity Health Care's primary providers to inform and encourage families to use the resources available at no cost. The partnership has been viewed as an added program benefit, and the Unity WIC team is excited to continue the partnership with the Greater DC Diaper Bank as they strive to meet the needs of DC WIC families. ■



Unity WIC Nutritionist Daisha Hammel picking up the first set of diapers, books, and toiletries from the baby pantry.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ADAGIO HEALTH WIC INCREASES BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES

By Ariel Cianfarano, Adagio Health Community Relations Coordinator; Samantha Elms, WIC Director and Breastfeeding Coordinator; Britney Zwergel, VP Nutrition Services; and Jane Eberhardt, WIC Operations Manager

Adagio Health WIC offices located in Pennsylvania's Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence counties will now offer free in-person and virtual prenatal classes and breastfeeding support groups for WIC-eligible and WIC breastfeeding and pregnant moms that feature Spanish translation services. The groups will be led by Adagio Health Breastfeeding Peer Counselors and are grant-funded by the American Academy of Pediatrics First Foods program.

"This project allows us to reach a diverse community by providing an additional opportunity to create a breastfeeding support system for our Spanish-speaking families," said Britney Zwergel, Vice President of Nutrition and Education at Adagio Health. "We're excited to bring these new support groups to the area in collaboration with one of our really terrific WIC participants."

WIC participant Laura Lora will provide Spanish translation services to the groups, and staff members are committed to learning Spanish through Rosetta Stone lessons to even better help connect with and support moms.

"Having extra support and knowledge during my own experience breastfeeding my babies has been invaluable," said Laura. "And I am happy to help break the language barrier for other moms to be set for success with great resources and a support system."

Continued on page 4



Laura Lora

SPRING 2023

■ New Jersey's Newark WIC Program Breastfeeding Offers the Gift of Love on Valentine's DayPage 3

■ West Virginia's Modernization of the WIC FMNPPage 4

■ Puerto Rico Virtual Clinic: A Holistic View of Modern WICPage 6

■ Mary's Center WIC Helps to Feed Migrant Families in DCPage 8

■ Farmers' Market Popups at Pennsylvania's Erie County WICPage 11





MARWIC TIMES is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Mid-Atlantic Region Office as a discretionary project of New Jersey WIC.

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- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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NEWS FROM THE USDA: PROPOSED WIC FOOD PACKAGE CHANGES

Revisions to the WIC food packages have been proposed that are intended to provide WIC participants with a wider variety of foods that align with the latest nutritional science. These changes would provide WIC state agencies with greater flexibility to prescribe and tailor food packages that accommodate participants' special dietary needs and personal and cultural food preference. Other advantages include providing more equitable access to supplemental foods and better promotion and support of individual breastfeeding goals.

Some of the proposed changes include:

- The expansion of the CVV to allow precut trays of fruits and vegetables
- If not already doing so, States will offer an additional form (such as canned or frozen) of fruits and vegetables
- The ability to reduce or remove juice in lieu of additional fruits and vegetables
- Allowing soy-based yogurt and cheese
- All cereals must be whole grain, listing "whole grain" as the first ingredient on their label
- The addition of quinoa, teff, wild rice, millet, cornmeal, and whole wheat naan
- Canned fish for all participants after the age of 2
- State agencies can allow a greater variety of package sizes to increase variety and choice

Please keep in mind that this is not an inclusive list and any of the proposed changes may be altered after taking public comments in consideration.

To learn more visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/fr-112122>. ■

WEST VIRGINIA WIC RUNS TRANSIT AD CAMPAIGN

By Lauren Korzep, MS

Many families utilize public transportation to go to and from WIC appointments. As a way to reach potential participants, West Virginia WIC ran a new campaign of transit ads from

September 2022 through March 2023 through the Mountain Line Transit Authority and Gateway Outdoor Advertising.

This campaign aimed to spread the word about WIC to anyone in need of its services in the Kanawha Valley and Monongahela areas.

We love the new branding and positive messaging to women and caregivers of young children. We hope this campaign will attract new and previously enrolled families. We want to let the community know that WIC is here to help. ■



Eye-catching WIC billboards are lining the roads of West Virginia.



NEW JERSEY'S NEWARK WIC PROGRAM BREASTFEEDING OFFERS THE GIFT OF LOVE ON VALENTINE'S DAY

By Sharon Schopfer, Breastfeeding Coordinator, IBCLC

New Jersey's Newark WIC Breastfeeding Staff celebrated our exclusively breastfeeding mothers on Valentine's Day. We had several mothers in attendance with our community partner, Sara Cooper from the Leaguers, accompanying a mother from their pregnancy program and one of our WIC clients.

Since COVID-19, this event was one of the only in-person breastfeeding meetings except for the last World Breastfeeding celebration in August 2022. We are excited to be back in person, connecting, and honoring our exclusively breastfeeding mothers.

We had several mothers participate in the celebration, and activities included an educational game of breastfeeding bingo along with Q&A, and prizes along the way. Fun camaraderie, delicious finger foods, charcuterie boards and breastfeeding education was enjoyed by all in attendance.

It was such a welcome event to be face-to-face with everyone and not operating remotely in a group fashion. It is great to be together in person celebrating again! ■



Gifts and raffle prizes



Table of treats and goodies



Newark WIC staff pictured (left to right) Rose Saint Albord, BFPC; Mariely Torres, BFPC; Lisa Olivo, BFPC, CLC; Sharon Schopfer, Breastfeeding Coordinator, IBCLC

WEST VIRGINIA WIC PARTNERS WITH DOLLAR GENERAL FOR OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

By Gina Kammerer, Outreach Coordinator, Central WV WIC

Beginning August 1, 2022, WV WIC partnered with Dollar General stores for a unique outreach campaign. The front of shoppers' receipts displayed the WIC logo, a QR code, and the tagline, "You Got This and We're Here to Help."

The purpose of the campaign was to promote a positive image in the communities we serve, reduce stigma, and reach potentially eligible participants. Those interested in learning more and possibly applying could simply scan the QR code and be directed to the WIC website. This campaign ran for twelve weeks in all Dollar General locations statewide.

We are excited to have reached so many people with such a positive, encouraging message. ■



MARWIC TIMES Calendar

The deadline for the Summer issue of MARWIC Times is May 5, 2023. Submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved in JPEG/PDF format) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

NEW JERSEY'S PASSAIC WIC HOLDS FARMERS' MARKET EVENT

By Dana Hordyszynski, Passaic WIC Program Coordinator

The Passaic WIC Program teamed up with City Green (Clifton, NJ) last October to offer boxed produce to clients during the Farmers' Market season. City Green is an urban farm and garden organization in New Jersey, working to revitalize urban areas through agriculture and educational programming.

City Green doubled the value of the Farmers' Market vouchers so that every client received \$10 worth of produce for one \$5 voucher. Clients received produce boxes that contained lettuce, two types of potatoes, onions, and carrots.

More than 100 boxes of produce sold within 30 minutes!

Passaic WIC looks forward to collaborating with City Green in 2023. ■



WEST VIRGINIA'S MODERNIZATION OF THE WIC FMNP

By Emily R. Jarvis, MS, RD, LD

In September 2022, West Virginia WIC was awarded a Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Benefit Delivery Modernization grant for the purpose of modernizing West Virginia's WIC FMNP.

In the past, West Virginia WIC utilized a paper voucher system to operate the program each year. However, from 2019 to 2021, West Virginia WIC was unable to find a bank willing to print and process vouchers for the program. In 2022, a banking contract was finally secured, but vouchers did not arrive at the State office until approximately two weeks prior to the last date for voucher distribution, significantly limiting the success of the program. Therefore, modernization of the West Virginia WIC FMNP is imperative to ensure the program operates yearly and successfully provides its benefits to the maximum number of WIC participants.

West Virginia WIC chose CDP, Inc.'s Farm Market Direct solution to modernize the program. Beginning in 2023, WIC participants who participate in the FMNP will receive a QR code sticker which will be adhered to their existing eWIC card. FMNP benefits will be loaded onto the QR code. Once a participant has chosen their produce at a farmers' market, they will present their QR code to the farmer for payment. The farmer will scan the participant's QR code with a smart device, and the participant will then verify the amount and enter a PIN to complete the purchase. Farmers have the ability to void purchases onsite if any errors occur during the transaction process.

In December 2022, West Virginia WIC's FMNP Coordinator participated in a USDA-sponsored panel discussion with two other WIC agencies also working toward modernizing their FMNP. During this event, individuals from all over the country were given the opportunity to ask live questions.

Questions received were mainly related to equipment for farmers, cell service, and the potential for a hybrid solution utilizing paper vouchers with QR codes printed on them. Farmers must have a smart device of their own (the FMNP BDM grant prohibits the purchase of equipment) that is connected either to Wi-Fi or a cellular network to process transactions at the farmers' market. CDP, Inc. does offer a hybrid solution using paper vouchers with QR codes printed on them, which farmers can take home and scan at their convenience. However, this hybrid solution is significantly more expensive than the fully electronic solution West Virginia WIC has chosen and may be cost prohibitive for some agencies.

If you have any questions regarding modernizing your WIC FMNP, feel free to contact Emily Jarvis at Emily.R.Jarvis@wv.gov. ■

Adagio Health *continued from page 1*

The goal of the classes and support groups for Spanish-speaking moms is to improve breastfeeding rates and guide moms on their breastfeeding journeys. The first class and support group were held virtually in January. Anny, a pregnant participant who attended class shared, "I enjoyed the breastfeeding class, and I learned a lot."

The next support groups were scheduled for March 16 and March 23, with subsequent classes and support groups to take place in May.

Topics for the classes include what to expect while breastfeeding, what to expect in the hospital, how to get prepared, and support services available. Discussions within the support group are led by breastfeeding moms, translated by Laura, and moderated by a peer counselor.

Support groups and classes are open to all Spanish-speaking pregnant or breastfeeding mothers, regardless of county residency. To refer a participant to these resources, please email Samantha Elms at selms@adagiohealth.org. For more information on WIC breastfeeding support, visit <https://www.adagiohealth.org/wic> or call 1-866-942-2778. ■

DELAWARE WIC SHARES BREASTFEEDING FINDINGS AT 2022 NWA NUTRITION AND BREASTFEEDING CONFERENCE

By Ida M. Lewis, IBCLC, RLC

The 2022 National WIC Association Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference was held in Orlando, FL, September 6-9, at which 89 WIC State agencies were represented. The Delaware WIC Program was amongst those states and was represented through the attendance of both Delaware WIC Program Breastfeeding Coordinators, Charmaine Sampson and Ida Lewis.

Prior to the meeting, agencies were requested to submit a proposal to the University of Nevada, Reno for the Implementation of the New WIC Breastfeeding Support, Learn Together. Grow Together Program. The New WIC Breastfeeding Support, Learn Together. Grow Together Program campaign is replacing USDA's original campaign, "Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work," which was launched more than 20 years ago. The goal of the new campaign, according to FNS, is to embrace a new generation of mothers participating in WIC. The campaign seeks to utilize proven strengths of social marketing for breastfeeding promotion among WIC mothers. "WIC mothers" include expectant mothers, mothers of newborns, and mothers who are currently breastfeeding.

The campaign wanted to include intervention strategies which consisted of activities conducted through Zoom, guest speakers, Buddy Pairs, and access to WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators. The Delaware WIC Program submitted a proposal, however, it was not chosen by the University of Nevada to implement the new campaign. The Director of the Delaware WIC Program, Joanne White, saw the merits of the Delaware WIC proposal and decided to launch a State-funded pilot program known as the Operational Adjustment Project.

The Operational Adjustment Project became successful in the state of Delaware. As a result, The National WIC Association Conference provided an opportunity for the Delaware WIC IBCLCs to share findings from the Pilot Project during a one-hour break-out session at the conference. The session was well attended, there were several questions concerning the findings, and how the program could be replicated in other states.

The Delaware WIC Program Breastfeeding Coordinators were fortunate to visit a local WIC clinic in Orange County, FL. To no surprise, the Florida WIC Director was facing staffing shortages, increased workloads, and low-paying entry-level salaries. To keep operations functioning, the Director utilized job sharing and remote worksites. WIC staff members across the nation are amazing because they have zeal to serve the community. All the staff members that the Delaware representatives encountered had a mantra, "I stay because I love what I do!"

The Delaware WIC Program Breastfeeding Coordinators also had an opportunity to visit vendors that offered new and improved breastfeeding products, new technology and Breastfeeding Best Practices data. The information share was invaluable and will assist the Delaware WIC Program in increasing its breastfeeding rates.

All the information garnered was shared with State and Local level WIC staff during the state-wide Supervisors Meeting. ■



Making a memory are Charmaine Sampson IBCLC, RLC, New Castle County Health Program Coordinator (left) and Ida M. Lewis IBCLC, RLC, Kent & Sussex Counties Breastfeeding Coordinator.

VIRGINIA'S CRATER WIC PROGRAM PARTICIPATES IN SAFE SLEEP EVENT

By Kayla Barber, WIC Coordinator, Crater Health District

The Petersburg Safe Sleep Initiative was formed with a goal of reducing sleep-related deaths in Petersburg, VA. On November 19, 2022, members of the initiative hosted an event at the local YMCA to provide safe sleep education and other resources to community members from the Petersburg region.

In addition to WIC, many other organizations supported the event including: the American Red Cross, Aetna Better Health, the City of Petersburg, the Virginia Department of Health, Walmart, and the YMCA. Attendees received raffle tickets for prizes that included diaper bags, strollers, and Pack 'n Plays.

Virginia WIC Nutritionists, Mitali Lele and Samantha Pappas, attended the event and educated attendees about breastfeeding as a method of reducing the risk of sleep-related deaths. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), breastfeeding can significantly reduce risks for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Crater WIC is excited to continue its partnership with the Petersburg Safe Sleep Initiative, and we are looking forward to participating in future community events. ■



Virginia WIC Nutritionists, Samantha Pappas and Mitali Lele, staffing information table at the Safe Sleep Event

PUERTO RICO VIRTUAL CLINIC: A HOLISTIC VIEW OF MODERN WIC

By Isamarie Sandoval, Nutritionist and Dany Villafuerte

Based on the learning obtained during the public health emergency in the Puerto Rico WIC Program, we designed and implemented the Virtual Clinic as a holistic service

model that allows us to complement face-to-face services for our participants. The project, which in its initial design has already been completed, has five conveniently integrated components to provide remote services to our participants. The project anticipates the changes in the law that are being discussed to modernize the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.

The project was designed to directly address two critical elements that are a priority for the WIC Program nationwide (Program Access and Customer Service) using a holistic approach that includes:

- Cutting-edge technology
- Adjustments in operational procedures
- Organizational structure

Regarding the flow of operations of the WIC Program, the Virtual Clinic required the definition and adaptation of some procedures associated with the provision of remote services and the redefinition of certain roles of the assigned personnel. These changes were accompanied by the organizational adjustments necessary to incorporate the Virtual Clinic into the regular operations of the Program. For this, an organizational structure was established that is directed by a supervisor in charge of the Virtual Clinic and full-time staff assigned to orientation, certification, training, and assistance activities. One of the advantages of the Virtual Clinic is that it does not require all the assigned personnel to be in the same physical space. Any WIC employee who is connected to the platform (regardless of their geographic location) will be available to attend the participant's appointment. This improves the efficiency of the WIC staff as it helps distribute the workload among the WIC staff across the different clinics in Puerto Rico. Once the interview is finished, the system proceeds with a short customer satisfaction survey of the completed service.

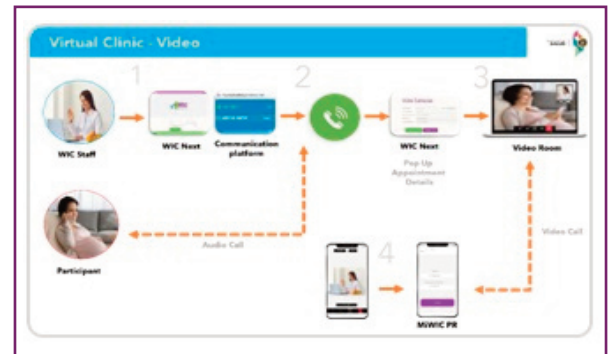
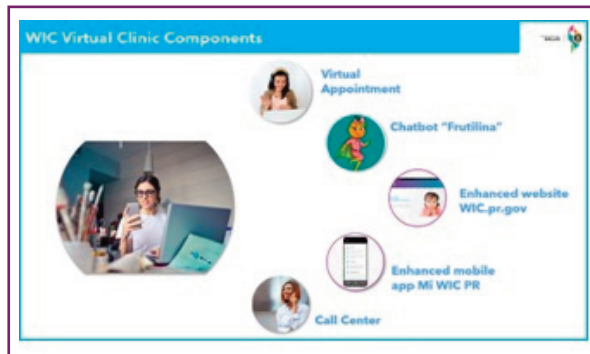
From a technology point of view, the WIC Virtual Clinic enables multiple service channels conveniently integrated through a technological platform to expand access to services, reduce barriers, and retain participants. The components are the following:

- Virtual Appointment platform
- Chatbot "Frutalina"
- Transactional portal (official website)
- Mobile app Mi WIC PR
- Call Center

After almost two months of operations, more than 25,000 virtual appointments have been attended; approximately 7,500 participants have been recovered, and approximately 2,100 educational contacts have been registered between live classes and online classes. The components of the Virtual Clinic allow us to offer certain services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Some of the most used services offered are:

- Remote certification
- Automated orientation (chatbot) or assisted orientation (call center)
- Live classes and online classes through the mobile app
- Scheduling appointments
- Transfer of documents electronically
- Notifications and messaging (two-way)
- WIC benefits and Virtual Card
- Technical support ■



Nutritionist Patricia Mayol, presenting a live nutrition class to remote participants.

OH BABY! ALLEGANY COUNTY WIC CELEBRATES MARYLAND BREASTFEEDING MONTH

By Christina Glenn, Allegany County WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator

During August, in celebration of Breastfeeding Month and to celebrate the accomplishments of our breastfeeding participants, Maryland's Allegany County WIC offered the opportunity for all breastfeeding moms to have their photo taken with their child. To promote the photo, the breastfeeding peer counselor sent an infographic with the information, and asked families to call and schedule a photo appointment time. Photos were taken in front of a beautiful backdrop, then printed and mailed to families. We were pleased with the turn out and the photos were well received by the participants. ■



Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Christina Glenn with her exclusively breastfed son.

A SEASON OF CHANGE AT THE MARO OFFICES

By JoAnna Hazard

The WIC team at MARO is so excited to introduce and welcome our newest team member, Kellie Boyle! Kellie is a Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist (RDN) and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). Also, she completed a Master's program at Immaculata University for Nutrition Education with a thesis in nutrition education research in 2016.



Kellie has been dedicated to working

for New Jersey's Mercer WIC Program since 2009, starting out as a Program Nutritionist and was promoted to the Chief Nutritionist/Nutrition Supervisor in 2015 for the Children's Home Society (CHS) Mercer WIC Program. At CHS, Kellie was in charge of supervising the program nutritionists and leading the nutrition unit. Also, she acted as a preceptor for dietetic interns over the years, all of whom learned and grew in their community rotation at WIC. She has a passion for servicing the community, nutrition education/counseling, and developing/analyzing yearly nutrition education program goals and objectives. She also led the CHS WIC nutrition team in hosting nutrition events, which included WIC food demos.

She's very eager and excited to start her career with the FNS, USDA in Robbinsville, NJ as a Program Specialist. ■

MARY'S CENTER WIC HELPS TO FEED MIGRANT FAMILIES IN WASHINGTON, DC

By Lisle Cole, CPPA/Nutrition Assistant

The Mary's Center WIC Program has been offering WIC services to migrant families temporarily housed in Washington, DC since the fall of 2022. A staff team travels once a week to set up a portable WIC clinic at the hotel where the migrant families are temporarily staying. This is made possible with the support of other Mary's Center departments including the Home Visiting/Family Support and Facilitated Health teams. Currently, the Mary's Center WIC program services over 75 migrant participants at the portable clinic.

The portable clinic provides full WIC services; the team includes nutritionists, nutrition technicians, and breastfeeding peer counselors. Each week the staff team transports all WIC materials and equipment to ensure the migrant participants are best supported in receiving and utilizing WIC program benefits. Many of the families have expressed their gratitude and feelings of trust toward Mary's Center staff because of these efforts. Some have shared their stories of journeying to Washington, DC, and the physical/emotional toll the process has taken on them and their families. Many mothers worry about their children eating less as they acclimate to a new food environment.

The Mary's Center WIC team has demonstrated compassion and professionalism in their treatment towards the migrant families. Arranging the delivery of WIC services has been a critical link to providing a broader range of health and community resources to these families during this vulnerable time in their lives. Overall, the Mary's Center WIC team has responded diligently to the need of these families, therefore encompassing the organization's mission of "embracing all communities to build better futures through high-quality healthcare, education, and social services." ■



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STAFFERS ATTEND GRAND OPENING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

By Jarene Fleming, IBCLC RLC, Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator

Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Family Health Service staffers Jarene Fleming, Division of Community Nutrition WIC Program; and Consuelo Staton, Division of Child and Family Health, represented the agency at the Birth Sisters of Charlottesville (BSOC) open house on Saturday, January 14. The grand opening welcomed the community to celebrate the group's new home. BSOC is a women of color-led, community-based doula collective, supporting women of color through their birth journey and into motherhood. Their aim is to amplify the resiliency of Black and Indigenous women of color, by drawing on life experiences, shared values, training, and sacred legacies to provide culturally-rooted, trauma intuitive perinatal services and advocacy. They serve birthing people in the City of Charlottesville and the surrounding counties of the Blue Ridge Health District. In its new location, which is convenient to public transportation, the group will provide childbirth education classes, breastfeeding support groups, prenatal yoga and massage, and space for the doulas to meet with their clients.

Fleming and Staton worked closely together while serving on the Virginia Medicaid Doula Benefit Work Group, the stakeholder group which was convened as required by the 2020 Virginia Acts of Assembly Chapter 1289. The work group was charged with developing educational requirements and guidelines for the state doula certification program. During that time, the two built ties with this community group, and others in the state, working to improve birth outcomes.

Fleming, the Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator, presented the group with the Governor's Breastfeeding Awareness Month Proclamation 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' signage, and information about the WIC Program for the center to share with clients. Staton donated diapers and baby wipes to the center's resource center, and children's books to their new library. The Birth Sisters of Charlottesville, the Blue Ridge Health District, and the Title V Program are participating in a two-year initiative through CityMatch, Alignment Action Learning Collaborative (AAC), which began in March 2021. This cooperative project team is charged with developing local action plans to address racial disparities in maternal health and birth outcomes.

The Health Department's participation in community events like this help build trust with community partners and provide great opportunities for inter-agency collaboration. ■



Co-Founders Lisa Brown (left) and Doreen Bonnet posting the Breastfeeding Welcome Here decal



Jarene Fleming (right) presents the Governor's Breastfeeding Awareness Proclamation to Co-Founder Lisa Brown



Birth Sisters of Charlottesville and Consuelo Staton (second from right)

WEST VIRGINIA WIC VALLEY HEALTHCARE OPERATES FIRST BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

West Virginia Valley HealthCare, in conjunction with West Virginia WIC, operated its first "Breakfast with Santa" this past December! This event was largely popular among participants, as well as staff. With the holidays right around the corner, Valley HealthCare spent time researching the individual interests of their participants.

With a total of 39 families and 97 children, the staff dedicated time and energy toward going above and beyond to meet the needs of families. With a total of 900 square feet of wrapping paper utilized, the staff lined their gifts throughout the hallways of their clinics and prepared for the scheduled arrivals of participants.

Families were able to utilize a drive-thru method in order to receive the gift. Children were also able to leave the vehicle to meet with Santa! Lively smiles and holiday cheer filled the air as the staff excitedly watched the children unwrap their gifts.

Aside from gifts, families that participated in the Breakfast with Santa event were also provided with a special, nutritious holiday recipe complete with all of the ingredients required to prepare it. Families were excited to try baking something new with their families.

Overall, the event was incredibly successful and popular amongst participants, who were already eager to know if Valley HealthCare would be doing something similar in following years. ■



Valley Health WIC Nutritionist Haley LeBarron

WEST VIRGINIA WIC PARTNERS WITH GROCERY STORE CHAINS FOR OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

By Vickie Snyder

The West Virginia State WIC Agency recently received funding for several advertising outreach projects. One of those projects was a grocery store campaign that placed WIC information on grocery store shopping carts. The placement included 10% of the carts in 55 stores across the state. The campaign will run for six months – from November 14, 2022 through May 13, 2023.

The advertisement includes a QR code for quicker access to WIC information. Three grocery store chains were included in the campaign. Advertisements were placed in 33 Kroger stores, 13 Food Lion, 6 Giant Eagle and 3 WEIS Markets.

This project spread WIC information throughout the state. ■



West Virginia WIC is spreading its message

VIRGINIA WIC STAFF PROVIDES OUTREACH FOR BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH

By Donesha Scott, Dr PH, CLC, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Liaison, Virginia WIC

On August 13, 2022, Virginia WIC participated in the second annual *Meet Me at the Mountain* Breastfeeding Awareness Month event at Mt. Trashmore Park in Virginia Beach. The celebration was hosted by the Consortium for Infant and Child Health (CINCH) and #757 Breastfeeds. Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) is the lead agency for CINCH and #757 Breastfeeds is their initiative designed to help promote and support breastfeeding in the Hampton Roads region through the Healthy Start/Healthy Families Workgroup.

Meet Me at the Mountain was exciting and filled with breastfeeding education, free giveaways, resources, great music, snacks, and lots of pregnant bellies and babies! Even extended family members came out to learn more about breastfeeding and how they could support the cause. Adults and children alike were seen in breastfeeding support t-shirts. The best one spotted at the event had to be a newborn wearing a white onesie with the word, 'BOOBIVORE!'

Virginia WIC was one of many vendors at the event and provided breastmilk transport bags in addition to other essential resources surrounding pregnancy and breastfeeding. The event also provided an opportunity to debunk myths in person about the WIC Program and to encourage families to sign up for services. Some of the other community partners included: Tidewater Lactation Group, Inc.; Bloom Lactation Counseling; SonShine & Rainbows Lactation; Breastfeeding Lactation Services, LLC; Beach Babies Lactation Support, LLC; Jas The Doula; the Chesapeake Health Department BabyCare Program; EVa Homebirth, LLC/Virginia Midwives Alliance; Virginia Cooperative Extension; The Up Center/Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs; HEDI (Health Equity Diversity and Inclusion); Fun Funky Mixed Media; and the City of Virginia Beach Infant Program.

Additionally, there were short demonstrations on hydration safety, baby weaning, paced bottle feeding, basic breastfeeding latches and positions, how to use a manual pump, beach babies lactation support, getting a good breast flange fit, and infant CPR/choking. Resource tables were packed with information from learning about breastfeeding and breastfeeding mechanics, to troubleshooting issues and weaning.

Virginia WIC representatives, Donesha Scott, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Liaison, and Kia Allen-Silvels, Breastfeeding Coordinator for the Chesapeake Health District, truly enjoyed the atmosphere and the opportunity to serve Virginia families. It was a joy to be in person to help families make informed decisions about breastfeeding, extending breastfeeding goals, and highlighting WIC breastfeeding services. We are pleased to strengthen the partnership between CINCH and Virginia WIC and certainly looking forward to supporting the event next year. ■



Information table at event



Breastfeeding supporter



Event attendee in awesome t-shirt



VA WIC representatives Kia Allen-Silvels and Donesha Scott

FARMERS' MARKET POPUPS AT PA'S ERIE COUNTY WIC

By Barb Warner, Outreach Coordinator and Nutritionist II

Last summer, Pennsylvania's Erie County WIC hosted a series of popup Farmers' Markets at our city sites. We know that there are some neighborhoods in our city that don't have access to a store, let alone a place that gets fresh produce on a regular basis. Our educational coordinator, Lisa Scully contacted several farmers and came upon a willing participant, Post Farms. They set up across from our JFK location on a few Wednesdays and also hosted an event at our BTW and Bayfront Mini Mall locations. Many clients came out of the WIC office with their Farmers' Market vouchers in hand and were able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to take home with them. Also, people who lived in the neighborhood or perhaps were driving down the street, came by to shop. Families received a raffle ticket for a chance to win one of our gorgeous gift baskets.

Thankfully, every popup day had beautiful sunshine and left our clients in a sunny disposition with delicious and healthy treats to share with their loved ones. This is just another great example of how WIC offers healthy choices to serve our community. ■



Post Farms owner Ana Post and her mom



Educational Director Lisa Scully and WIC Nutritionist, CLC and Online Coordinator Alex Benacci



WEST VIRGINIA WIC PARTNERS WITH WEST VIRGINIA HEALTH RIGHT

West Virginia Health Right is West Virginia's oldest and largest free and charitable clinic. Today, they operate out of six total clinic centers, two of them being mobile! They provide service and free comprehensive care to nearly 42,000 medically underserved, uninsured, and underinsured adults from approximately 35 counties across the state with the help of physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, nurses, and other medical professionals who volunteer. Through these individuals and the programs, individual patients with diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses can have regularly scheduled appointments to be medically supervised, or those with acute illness are able to receive non-emergency care both on-site and at the office of the volunteer specialists.

West Virginia Health Right employs several services including: Dental, Behavioral Health, COVID-19 Testing/Vaccinations, Family Planning, Health Education, HIV Prevention, LGBTQIA+ Health, Pharmacy, Primary Care, Testing and Screening, as well as Vision Care to ensure optimal health for patients. However, their diverse programs also greatly aid in their mission. Cooking classes, Harm Reduction, HOPE, S.C.A.L.E, and Tobacco Cessation are some of the classes regularly offered for adults. More recently, the centers have begun employing new classes for children. This includes their ever-popular new free dance classes! These courses are offered at the West Side Center on Tuesdays from 4 to 6pm. The classes are free to all, even if you are not a current West Virginia Health Right participant. The center offers 30-minute modern dance, ballet, and hip hop classes to appeal to different age groups, schedules, and interests!

West Virginia WIC recently partnered with West Virginia Health Right, setting up WIC outreach tables during the dance classes to help reach eligible populations that may be unaware of services WIC has to offer. WIC Outreach utilized branded animal lunch boxes, brochures, and books to encourage interest from parents and children in a casual and relaxed atmosphere. Further, WIC was able to promote the importance of a healthy, balanced, and nutritious lifestyle, complete with regular exercise! Dancing is a great way to teach children how to be active and remain physical for the rest of their lives. Dance utilizes the entire body and all muscle groups, improving flexibility, coordination, balance, stamina, strength, and posture! In addition to this, dance can also encourage development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills in children.

In the future, West Virginia WIC plans to partner with Stealthy Healthy, the cooking courses offered at the community Wellness Center. These courses take place every Wednesday and Thursday in their state-of-the-art teaching kitchen. They teach food and meal prep basics that encourage a healthy lifestyle. The courses are free and open to everyone 18+, regardless of whether you are a Health Right participant. During the courses, free childcare is available for children under 12 in the Little Sprouts Kids' Room. Schedules of the events can be found on the West Virginia Health Right website under the News and Events tab at <https://wvhealthright.org/>. ■

VIRGINIA WIC UNVEILS JOY-LOVE-HAPPINESS MEDIA CAMPAIGN

By Megan Nason, Virginia WIC Program Manager

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, WIC has seen many changes and challenges. Through it all, WIC has persevered and continued providing services to its participants. During this time, Virginia WIC embarked on a marketing strategy to promote the Program to the citizens of the Commonwealth. We wanted to let them know that we still are here to serve them.

In collaboration with a local marketing agency and coordinated by the agency's Graphics Designer, Anne McMillan, the Virginia State WIC Office created the Joy-Love-Happiness campaign. The statewide campaign is comprised of social media, billboards, radio, and video ads. Additionally, a toolkit was created and shared with local agency staff to help promote the message to include videos, TikToks, social media posts, banner ads, and billboards.

Virginia WIC is excited to share a few of the campaign images here. The campaign has been well-received, and Virginia WIC is receiving tons of positive feedback. In December 2022, the social media digital campaign report reflected close to 2,000,000 impressions, including YouTube views and Snap Chat and Instagram clicks.

If interested, the video and more of the media campaign may be accessed on the Virginia WIC webpage at: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/wi/>. ■



WEST VIRGINIA BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN SPRINGS INTO ACTION

By Diane Landy, WIC Outreach Coordinator

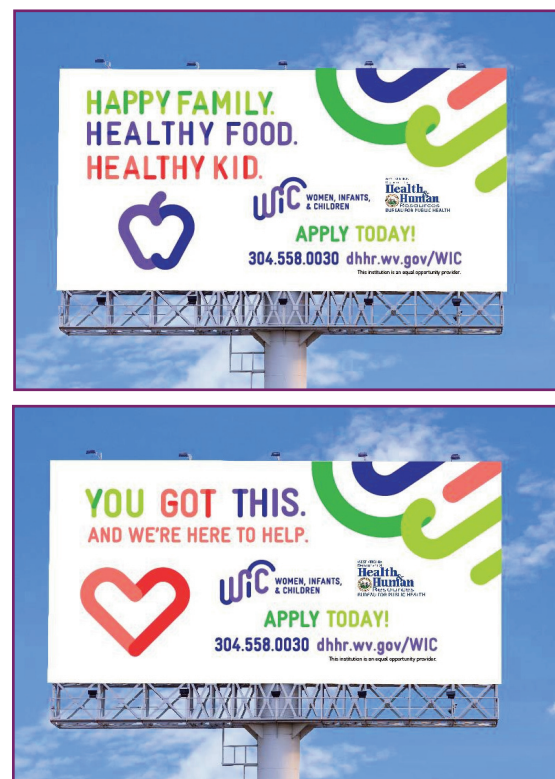
West Virginia WIC is making an impact in a very big way. We are reaching over 1.5 million pedestrians, drivers, and passengers each week with our supergraphic billboard ads throughout the state. As the pandemic continues to recede and people have more confidence in their safety, travel is on the rise, which makes outdoor ads a smart choice to promote the WIC Program.

Operational Adjustment Funding enabled WV WIC to launch this six-month, statewide campaign, which consists of 25 billboard locations across the state strategically chosen in high-traffic areas to increase awareness of the Program to target and reach potential participants. Two of the billboards are digital, which come with the following pros: no production cost associated with printing the artwork and the ability to change out messaging as needed. Additionally, because they are a fairly recent option (at least in WV), digital billboards tend to get a lot of attention and visibility 24 hours a day.

Billboards are still an effective way to market any program. Research indicates that people easily register photographic data and short phrases or slogans. In one of the graphic ads pictured here, the word *Mom* was omitted from the slogan, "You Got This, Mom ..." so that passersby would not subconsciously disregard the message because they assumed the Program was only relevant to mothers. Note that the other ad uses *family*, which has a broader scope, and is more inclusive of the modern family unit and its ever-evolving dynamics.

Advantages of billboard ads include their ability to target large, diverse markets and to increase the frequency of exposure. The WIC supergraphic billboards are eye-catching, have a strong visual effect, and are therefore memorable. These colorful WIC messages in big scale convey the Program as youthful and positive, and appeal to modern, text-savvy generations. They have the power to increase caseload, and in doing so affect more people's lives in a positive way. We who work in the outreach field realize we must never assume that everyone knows about the WIC Program. The more strategies we employ, the better.

Special thanks to all who made OAF possible and to all WV WIC staff who worked toward securing this funding! ■



Eye-catching WIC billboards are lining the roads of West Virginia.