



Thursday, April 20, 2017  
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Bureau of Family Nutrition



Welcome, Introductions and  
Recognition

# Recognition: Frontline, Intake, and Clerical Staff



# Recognition: Community Partnerships







**MCH Initiative Documentation**  
**See slides**



# Engaging to Make a Difference Synopsis & Discussion

# Mission of the 2017 WIC Conference

- To set the stage for local agency WIC providers as Illinois WIC moves toward achieving its philosophy that providing food instruments is not enough. Every family is unique and deserves to be met where they are, receive warm referrals, individualized nutrition education and counseling, comprising shopping and food preparation skills building. Only through meaningful conversation can families be engaged to make healthy choices including on-going participation in WIC. Participants should leave appointments feeling affirmed as parents/caregivers, feel confident in using their food benefits, be ready to make small steps towards improved health, refer friends & family to the program, & come back to the clinic themselves.





The One Thing we need....



# Feedback

- Possibilities
  - Time restrictions
  - Referral options
  - Seek and know participants/gain trust
  - Create safe space & welcoming space
  - Appts with the same staff person each visit
  - Validate/Affirm
  - PCS skills
  - Community coalitions
  - Computer kiosks for referrals



# Feedback cont.

- Training
  - Customer Service
  - Mental Health Basics
  - Cultural Sensitivity
  - Non-verbal Communication
  - Creating/Maintaining Resource Book
- Supports
  - Mom support group
  - Social workers available
  - Consistency across agencies



Sharing

- **Groups 1 - 13**



# Results : WIC is more than food:

WIC program administration influences how food packages are valued	
↑ Value	↓ Value
<b>-WIC Clinic Level-</b>	
-Flexible	-Rigid rules
-Organized	-Tech failures
-Accessible	-Difficult to navigate
<u>Staff</u> : caring & knowledgeable	<u>Staff</u> : rude attitudes
<u>Nutr Ed</u> :	<u>Nutr Ed</u> :
-Engaging	-Repetitive
-Interactive	-Boring
-Individualized	-Wastes time
<b>-WIC Vendor Level-</b>	
-Clear food list	-Confusing/ complicated food list
-Correct, clear labeling	-No/ incorrect labeling
-Consistency	-Inconsistent items allowed
-EBT for WIC	-Holding up the line
-Well-trained cashiers	-Stigma from rude cashiers and other customers
<b>-Policy Level-</b>	
Choices and autonomy	Restrictive benefits

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# Unsupportive, disorganized, and frustrating WIC clinic experiences are a barrier to remaining enrolled in WIC

- Some families found WIC was ‘worth it’; for others it was more of a hassle to remain in the program due to their experiences at the WIC clinic
- At certain clinics, participants experienced rudeness or judgement from staff members that didn’t focus on participants’ strengths and needs
- Participants encountered front line staff they felt were combative with them about their paperwork and documentation as well as filing mistakes that happened due to system glitches not themselves
- Participants described many staff members to have rude attitudes and perceived that they “*didn’t like their jobs*”

**Results that decrease WIC value: Clinic and Staff**



Many participants found it very difficult to reach a staff member on the phone if they needed to re-schedule or get in the system for the first time

*“For me, well, it was a pain in the butt to be honest, to begin with because I was calling and I didn’t know how far along I was. So, I couldn’t get an appointment here for like two or three weeks. And then when I finally get here, I couldn’t get a doctor’s appointment for another two or three weeks. So, I’m like I don’t know if I’m two months pregnant or if I’m four months pregnant. You know so it’s kind of like the timeline, it took a while. That was the only thing I didn’t like.”*

**Caregiver age 32**

**Results that decrease WIC value: Clinic and Staff**





Clinic miscommunication and technical difficulties make it harder for participants to stay in WIC

*“I came to an appointment, they told me their computers were down. So I try to come back again and they told me the same thing, so I’m just not coming back cause it’s just too hard for me to be coming back and forth. I feel like if the computer’s down, they like should let people know before we even come all the way here, coming out the way.” Caregiver age 22*

**Results that decrease WIC value: Clinic and Staff**



# Flexible, organized clinics with staff that care and engage- keep participants enrolled in WIC

- Participants valued clinics that were organized, engaging, and communicative
- Participants preferred clinics whose staff were flexible and amicable
- Participants more often spoke positively about the individual and tailored counseling they received from knowledgeable staff than group classes
- Referrals to other services were appreciated as well as tracking the child's growth and development

**Results that increase WIC value: Clinic and Staff**



# Results : WIC is more than food:

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↑ Value

↓ Value

**-WIC Clinic Level-**

Staff: caring & knowledgeable

Staff: rude attitudes

**-Policy Level-**

Choices and autonomy

Restrictive benefits

# Participants' perceptions of staff attitudes can decrease WIC value

*“That’s the mentality of some of these workers that you deal with, and especially in the X. They feel like they can take they sweet time because you have to, cause you need the stuff. And a lot of people get fed up with that. I ain’t got to wait, I’ll just go buy it, you know. It’s all type of things that I’ve seen, experienced, cause sometimes you might go to the office, and you might see somebody getting belligerent and cursing out the worker because of a situation like that. So it’s just all type of things.”*

*Caregiver age 35*



**Results that decrease WIC value: Clinic and Staff**

# Staff that advocate for participants are valued

Participants voiced appreciation for front line staff that “worked with them” if they needed to reschedule, were running late, or weren’t able to navigate the system

*Like this one lady she came in with me one day but she didn't have an appointment for that day, they were like we don't have room here, but we can call around and we can take you at one of our sister stores. So, they called around, they found somebody that could take her, so she went over there and they saw her. They try to work with you, they don't try to turn people away. They try to bring you in. **Caregiver age 26***

**Results that increase WIC value: Clinic and Staff**



Participants at certain clinics felt safe and supported in the clinic environment with staff that were not judgmental and showed they care

*I think that when they ask, 'are you in a safe environment?' that's valuable because there's people that are not in a safe environment, and they can refer you to people that can help you. They have different agencies and stuff that they can tell you about. I think that the weight and the height is very helpful as well because in between times of doctor's visits, your baby's growing and you be curious if your baby's on the right track. They give you nutrition information about how to make your meals healthier as well, and they have quick ways to prepare meals. If you have problems with weight gain or weight loss, the nutritionist gives you ideas of different things you can do. Caregiver age 31*



**Results that increase WIC value: Clinic and Staff**

Participants had positive reflections of individual staff members that made them feel comfortable or made a personal connection with them

*His name was the Milk-Man cause he obviously gave out WIC coupons for us to get milk, so he was called the Milk-Man. He was also a comedian, he would make us laugh, you know, he was down to earth and I guess when he left, a lot of people left. So, it wasn't just me, it was quite a bit of people.*

***Caregiver age 26***



**Results that increase WIC value: Clinic and Staff**

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# Next Steps

- What is your “one thing”?

