

February 19, 2016

Dear WIC Local Agency Coordinators:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to encourage and support the integration of the WIC program and the Becoming a Mom (BaM) program.

It takes many individuals, programs and organizations to provide appropriate health services for the women, infants and children in Kansas. Recognizing this, it is our desire that the WIC program at both the state and local levels collaborate fully with the BaM program to seamlessly deliver services that will really make a difference in the lives of our participants. I believe that, working together we will be more able to achieve the outcomes that both programs desire, than if both programs worked separately.

Actually, its three entities working together - BaM, WIC and moms! New moms have a great desire to be successful in their important role in loving and raising their children.

The WIC program has long been recognized for its role in providing nutrition education including breastfeeding counseling as well as nutritious foods and referrals to needed health care and social services. The BaM program and curriculum is well developed and delivered by trained individuals with experience. The WIC and BaM partnership is an ideal way to help pregnant women realize full-term pregnancies, deliver healthy weight babies and nurture their children.

This letter of support authorizes and provides clarity for the use of WIC funds to implement this partnership. Note: The use of WIC funds for partnerships such as this is appropriate. WIC is not "loosening up" or changing any policies or regulations. WIC was invited to discuss the potential of a collaboration and recognized BaM as a significant opportunity that merits our full support.

Here are a few examples of what a successful partnership can look like:

- Providing incentives, paid for by both programs, to encourage participation and attendance at both BaM classes and WIC appointments.
- Creating BaM appointments and classes within the KWIC system. Granting KWIC "Receptionist" security clearance to BaM staff to enable them to schedule participants for classes within KWIC.
- Coordinating schedules to enhance involvement and reduce barriers to participation.

- Exchanging demographic information for outreach and coordination. (The WIC “Rights and Responsibilities” statement was recently revised to include the BaM program.)
- Working together in producing educational materials that provide consistent messages on topics of interest to participants.
- Creating outreach materials that clearly demonstrate the partnership that exists between WIC and BaM.
- Conducting joint outreach efforts to publicize both programs. (There are eligible families in every community who do not know about the WIC program or the BaM program.)
- Communicating with local officials and other community programs to demonstrate the success of the collaboration.
- Providing “active” referrals between both programs in lieu of “passive” referrals. In other words, WIC and BaM program staff make verbal or written contact with each other to enhance successful enrollment of potential clients.
- WIC Funding may also be used to cover the cost of WIC staff time while participating with BaM staff in joint efforts that benefit WIC clients.

While funding and administrative procedures pave the way for a successful partnership, enthusiastic and committed staff members will always be the key to success.

We congratulate the WIC and BaM staff of Saline County for pioneering this effort. We recognize the foundational work that they have accomplished and want to spread this success to other areas of the state.

Implementing a partnership with BaM is not a statewide decision. Each WIC local agency will make their own decision whether or not to establish a partnership. Local WIC agencies may submit an addendum to their WIC budget to request additional funds for WIC expenses related to establishing a partnership with BaM.

We look forward to working with WIC agencies who choose to partner with BaM. We stand ready to provide technical assistance, funding and whatever else we can provide to assist you in this exciting endeavor. Please call your state agency contact or feel free to contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,



David Thomason, Director

Nutrition and WIC services