KANSAS WIC INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
KANSAS-WIC-I-2023-08

TO: Parent and Sub-Agencies

FROM: Dave Thomason
Nutrition & WIC Services Director

DATE: May 17, 2023

REMINdERS:
May 20 April Affidavits due
June 20 May Affidavits due
July 5 Local Agency Budgets due
Ongoing Public Comment Period for the 2025 Dietary Guidelines
Ongoing Read the Monthly wichealth Newsletter (Subscribe in the top, left corner.)

SAVE THE DATES:
May 23 DHA Supplementation During Pregnancy Webinar 11–12
A mass email with a Zoom link was sent on 4/11/23 and 5/10/23.
There will be NO continuing education.
May 26 wichealth Coffee Talk 12:30–1
Sep 27–29 2023 “Hybrid” NWA Technology, Program Integrity and Vendor Conference

RE: State WIC Director Announces Retirement
FFY2024 Budgets
Affidavit Reimbursements and Submitting Affidavits – State Fiscal Year End
Affordable Internet for All WIC Clients
2024 Nutrition Services Plan (NSP)
Nutrition Matters ONE Pilot Sites
USDA Graphics on WIC Eligibility vs Participation
Local Agencies assigned to Suzan Lewis
Formula Update: Abbott Specialty Products
WIC Advisory Committee – Minutes (4/25/2023) and Call for Agenda Items (7/25/23)
Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course
**State WIC Director Announces Retirement**
To all WIC staff across the state.

After 25 years working as the director of the Kansas WIC program and 41 total years in the workforce, I am announcing my retirement. My last day at work will be July 3, 2023.

It is hard to put into words how I feel about working alongside of you serving many thousands of women, infants, and children over the years. Since May of 1998, when I started, many things in WIC have happened and changed and grown and then changed again. It’s truly amazing.

I am grateful that I have met many of you during my career and had the opportunity to feel your commitment to serving others. You taught me a lot as I “grew up” in WIC and learned how everything works. Some of you I haven’t met. Nevertheless, my heart is full because I know the great things you all have done and keep doing in communities across Kansas. Thank you, thank you! I will miss WIC and especially working with all of you.

With retirement comes the welcome flexibility for my wife and I to do more good work and visit places in Kansas and other states that we haven’t been to before. We won’t be resting. We both look forward to being with and around people like you - good people doing good things.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see attached flyer regarding optional retirement party.

**FFY2024 Budgets**
The May P-Memo contains information for submitting FFY2024 Budgets. Please plan ahead and make note of the date budgets are due – July 5, 2023.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Advise all WIC, Health Department or County staff who are involved with providing budgets to the WIC Program to read the May P-Memo for information concerning FFY2024 Budgets.

**Affidavit Reimbursements and Submitting Affidavits – State Fiscal Year End**
Due to the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY), the State’s SMART accounting system will be unavailable to process affidavit reimbursements for several weeks. Reimbursements will be delayed for this reason.

Please continue to submit affidavits as usual to the State Agency Fiscal email. Affidavits will be reviewed and submitted to the fiscal department for reimbursement as soon as the SMART system is back up and running for the new SFY.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Notify all WIC staff, as well as other Health Department or County staff who are involved with providing affidavits to the WIC Program.
Affordable Internet for All WIC Clients

The Affordable Connectivity Program helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, WIC appointments and more. If a member of the household participates in WIC, the household is eligible.

ACTION REQUIRED: Refer clients to GetInternet.gov to apply. Promote the flyers and other materials available in the Consumer Outreach Toolkit. Share this information with staff who may not receive I and P Memos.

2024 Nutrition Services Plan (NSP)

The 2024 NSP Guidance and Forms are attached to the May I-Memo. Forms are due to your State agency nutrition lead by November 1. See NSP Forms for your agency’s nutrition lead.

ACTION REQUIRED: Share this information with staff who complete the NSP. Send questions to your nutrition lead.

We plan on updating the Nutrition Services Plan within the next year and anticipate it being available for the 2025 Plan. We are looking into hosting dietetic interns at the state that can assist us with this project. We are also interested in any local agencies that would like their dietetic interns to participate in this opportunity.

ACTION REQUIRED: Contact Danica Pelzel with questions.

Nutrition Matters ONE Pilot Sites

The State agency has selected the following agencies to pilot the Nutrition Matters ONE platform:

- Crawford County
- Geary County
- Johnson County
- Riley County

As part of the application process, agencies were asked, “How do you see this project benefiting your participants and/or clinic experience?” Their responses are shared at the end of this I-Memo.

All of the pilot agencies will use the platform’s content library and client education modules as visual supplements for remote and in-person appointments. Riley County will also have access to the lessons as an alternative for secondary education appointments.

Tentatively, the pilot will begin in July 2023 and end in February 2024. Throughout and after the implementation period, we will evaluate the following:

- ONE’s effectiveness for nutrition education delivery during all types of appointments
- How ONE compares to wichealth for secondary education lessons and other resources
- The practicality of using ONE during appointments
- Clients’ perceptions and use of ONE
- Etc.
Findings from the evaluation will determine if we expand ONE across the state.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Share with WIC staff. Look for updates on the pilot in future I-Memos. Contact Danica Pelzel with questions.

**USDA Graphics on WIC Eligibility vs Participation**
The USDA released graphics on national and state estimates of WIC eligibility compared to the number of participating individuals in 2020. In Kansas, an estimated 45% of eligible individuals participated in WIC. Nationally, an estimated 56.9% of eligible 1-year-olds participated in WIC, while that estimated number dropped to 23.8% of 4-year-olds. Compared to other races and ethnicities, non-Hispanic white eligible individuals had the lowest participation rates at 35%.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Consider the data when planning outreach activities in your communities (E.g., Targeting Head Start programs to increase child participation).

**Local Agencies assigned to Suzan Lewis**
Suzan Lewis is now ready to function as the lead for the following counties: Dickinson, Ford, Lincoln (and sub-agencies Ellsworth, Jewell, Mitchell, and Ottawa), Marshall, NEK (Atchison, Brown, Jackson) and Rush Counties

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you are in one of these counties, please save Suzan’s contact information and direct all questions to her. Email Suzan Lewis and phone 785-296-2865.

**Formula Update: Abbott Specialty Products**
On May 10, Abbott provided this information about certain specialty products:

- Abbott is beginning to ship Alimentum® powder in the U.S. This product will begin to appear at the largest national WIC retailers in the coming days and weeks. Abbott will continue to add customers as additional supply becomes available.
- NeoSure® powder which has been in a low inventory position is now available for all customers to order.
- EleCare® Infant and EleCare® Jr (Unflavored and Vanilla) are available for all customers to order.
- All metabolic products and Similac® PM-60/40 are available for order with the exception of Cyclinex®-2 and Propimex®-2 which are currently slated to be available for ordering in May and June respectively.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Provide information to appropriate staff. If you have clients getting Alimentum, NeoSure, EleCare Infant or EleCare Jr by direct shipment through State agency order, check with local vendors about ordering for your client before submitting a direct ship order.

**WIC Advisory Committee – Minutes (4/25/2023) and Call for Agenda Items (7/25/23)**
The approved minutes of the April 25, 2023 WIC Advisory Committee meeting posted here.
The next WIC Advisory Committee conference call is Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 9:00 AM. The facilitator for the July meeting is Vicki Brown, form Linn County. Please submit agenda items to your WAC representative or Patrice Thomsen by July 17. You can find your representative name and contact information on the WIC Advisory Committee page of the Kansas WIC website.

As a reminder, questions about policy implementation should be directed to your agency’s assigned state staff member. Alternates are also invited, but may choose not to attend, unless notified that your Representative will not be attending. Questions? Email Patrice Thomsen or call 785-296-1189.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Read minutes. Submit any agenda items by July 17.

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**Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course**

*Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course – Save the date!* Updates coming soon on the website. [z.umn.edu/MNIC23](https://z.umn.edu/MNIC23) Registration opens May 1.

**Topics include:**

- Child Obesity Guidelines
- Weight Inclusive Approaches to MCH Nutrition
- Weight Inclusive Practices in Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs
- Positive Deviance Concepts to Improve WIC Counseling
- Trends in Food Intake Among Infants and Toddlers
- Cannabis Use in Pregnancy and Lactation
- Social Emotional Learning

**Live Virtual Program:** Wednesday, July 26 and Thursday, July 27. Noon - 4:30 p.m. (CDT) Hosted synchronously through an online Zoom webinar. Cost is $35/person

**Fully Online Distance:** September 1 - December 31. Cost is $35/person

Can't join synchronously in July? Attend through a self-led recorded online program any time September through December.

**Accreditation:** Hours are pending but estimated 7-8 hours of continuing education.

**Questions?** Email cpheo@umn.edu

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Pass along to staff. This is an excellent program for WIC nutritionists and nurses. The recorded distance option makes it easy to watch the different sessions.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact the state staff member assigned to your agency.

**Items included below and/or provided as separate documents:**

- Dave Thomason’s retirement invitation
- 2024 NSP Forms
- 2024 NSP Guidance
- ONE Pilot Agencies’ Responses
As part of the Nutrition Matters ONE platform pilot application process, agencies were asked, “How do you see this project benefiting your participants and/or clinic experience?” Read below for responses from the chosen pilot sites:

**Crawford County**

Having this program would help us to educate individuals at a time that is more convenient for them. This program will allow us to provide them with an educational piece that they can review after they are home and have a little more time to focus on the topics of discussion. This program will also allow them to find other topics that are related that they have interest in and can then do further research on their own. This program will allow us to see exactly what they have reviewed and allow us to talk with them more when they come back for their follow up appointment. We have found out that often our clients are of generation that prefers digital material over physical papers that take up space and often clutter their space.

**Geary County**

Participating in this project will help us investigate the opportunity to provide more complete education and support to our WIC participants. As WIC continues to navigate the pandemic and begins to modernize, ONE can potentially help us reach our participants outside of standard WIC appointments. ONE seems like it would be a streamlined way for us to work with participants on our time AND on their time.

Throughout the pandemic, our staff struggled with how to provide quality nutrition education over the phone, without any tools. Our staff would be invested in utilizing the program to its fullest potential and creating buy-in with participants. It has been especially difficult to work with families that speak Spanish during this time. I'm happy to see the tools are available in both English and Spanish.

Our clinic would be open to any position in the piloting program. Our clinic is unique in that it serves a large military population, a transient community, in addition to our more permanent community. I think it would be interesting to see how much effort goes in for a participant that will enter the ONE program only to leave shortly after. It may be of note to see what other state agencies are leaning towards as far as programs like these go and how might a participant be able to use the program in different states.

Our clinic currently does a lot of texting with participants. For the secondary nutrition education appointments specifically, we send out the wichealth-to-gos via text message. We really like this addition from wichealth. From first glance, ONE seems to provide so much more than just a review handout. I can see that ONE may help us fill in the gaps and create a "one stop shop" for both staff and participants. I know some different options are being piloted; I would really like to see how the Content Library + Client Education
Modules + Lessons package works. I think it would create a very comprehensive level of care for our participants and give staff multiple opportunities to share education and support to families. ONE also has the potential to be a great recruitment and retention resource.

Our staff is dedicated to providing the best care to our WIC participants. We look forward to the modernization coming to WIC to be able to provide flexible services that best fit the needs of each participant and WIC family.

**Johnson County**

Almost all our WIC appointments are done remotely by phone, so having a platform to use with clients will help keep them engaged while providing informative content tailored to their needs. The WIC staff in Johnson County are also fairly tech savvy, so look forward to trying the innovative projects.

**Riley County**

Our clinic has been operating remotely by phone since the COVID 19 pandemic began. One missing piece of effective education has been digital communication between client and staff. Sometimes staff will email links or documents for clients to reference as needed. The ONE website provides an interactive option, allowing educational prints to be shared with clients as well as linked to self-directed education. Our clinic has already begun using the nutrition matters handouts and booklets with great success, by mailing them to families. We love the visuals, and the information provided is essential to the needs and goals of clients and staff.

Currently, many of our low-risk secondary educations are completed via wichealth.org. The clients that use wichealth do seem to like it, and we promote it as an independent and client driven option. However, not all staff are up to date on how to interact with the staff profile. ONE may provide a better staff user experience. We really like the "scrolling" style format on ONE and see it as complimentary for in person appointments as well. We like the connectivity of the program and would like to be able to use the platform with our high-risk clients, too, as a point of reference and follow up on the education they receive in appointments. Our clients have experience with the wichealth.org platform and could provide direct feedback comparing their experience with the ONE platform. Over the past three years our clinic has an average of 75 active wichealth.org accounts per quarter and 1136 completed lessons reported. We are hopeful you will see that Riley County has the potential to maximize the educational power of the platform and to get valuable feedback by piloting the program here.