Election Year Choices and Challenges

WIC advocates and providers face political, fiscal and operational challenges in the coming year. Working together, CWA can help you—our WIC community—meet those challenges.

The November elections are shaping up to be a very clear choice between competing philosophies on the role of government in our lives— including programs like WIC. CWA members can play an important role in ensuring WIC’s future, by educating current leaders and Congressional candidates about why WE NEED WIC—more about this at Fall Conference and on page 3. We can also ensure that everyone eligible to vote is registered before the October 22 deadline, and remind staff and participants to vote on November 6.

Once the elections are over, members of the “lame duck” Congress will need to hear from you about the real human consequences of potential WIC cuts. WIC is vulnerable to drastic sequestration reductions that automatically go into effect in January 2013 unless Washington leaders find an alternative strategy to reduce the national debt.

Meanwhile, those of you working to keep WIC going during tough times have successes to share! Just look inside this issue for stories of data use, technology and partnerships to increase caseload; new materials for nutrition education and outreach; strides toward implementing health care reform; and the positive impact of wellness programs.

Since our founding in 1992, CWA has a proud history of activism on behalf of the communities we serve. With your support and engagement, we’ll continue our work during this critical election year.
The WIC scene is changing! New players, new policies, and new challenges are coming on stage. Welcome to those attending CWA’s 2012 Fall Management Conference. It can be your ticket to becoming a Star WIC Manager, with information, skills and practical tools to providing Platinum Service to our most important customers: WIC mothers, children, and their families.

For those of you staying in your local WIC agencies to keep things humming, thank you! Be sure to ask your colleagues to share with you what they’ve learned, and CWA will strive to continue providing timely and relevant information through all our regular channels. Be sure you’ve subscribed to our biweekly e-newsletter, the CWA Flash, at www.calwic.org!

At the Conference on Tuesday, CWA President Peggy Redfern will open with a welcome to all before CWA’s Teresa Morris shares WIC Worksite Wellness updates. Interim Division Chief Christine Nelson will provide State WIC updates and then The California Endowment will introduce us to their new campaign, Health Happens Here.

Later that day, a local WIC Agency Panel will share their creative uses of the new GIS Mapping data. Read the related article on page 7 for a taste of this panel presentation. Platinum trainer David Rabiner will then take the spotlight and tell us How to Succeed, Stay Sane and Have Fun at Work!

On Wednesday, after celebrating with some awards, another talented Local Agency cast of characters will highlight creative ways to “liberate” your WIC data to improve operations.

Following the presentation of Career Achievement Awards, Laurie True will provide State and Federal Updates featuring the federal budget drama and how CWA and WIC Ambassadors plan to make a positive impact.

Finally, Rene Mollow, from the newly formed California Health Benefit Exchange, will give us a Health Care Reform update.

We hope this time together in Sacramento—and the weeks and months that follow—inspires WIC managers to network, collaborate, and problem-solve, as well as recognize and share best practices in providing Platinum Service to California WIC families!
Remember last year’s paper plate campaign? We are grateful for the impact so many WIC staff and participants made in this effort to educate our legislators about why We Need WIC. Now it’s time for Phase 2, and we’ll need your help to ensure WIC survives!

**Electoral Strategy: Where Do Candidates Stand?**

Gearing up for the November 2012 election, CWA is leading the next phase of the We Need WIC Campaign: the electoral strategy. In August, CWA mailed a questionnaire to all California congressional candidates. Since September, WIC Ambassadors have been following up with candidates to learn of their views on two critical issues:

1. full funding for the WIC program, and
2. set-aside funds for the breastfeeding peer counselor program.

As responses come in, CWA posts them at [http://calwic.org/policy-center/we-need-wic](http://calwic.org/policy-center/we-need-wic). The WIC community can then use these responses as an educational tool for November’s election to see which candidates support WIC’s mission.

**Want to get involved?** Check the We Need WIC webpage to read the Letter to Candidates and Questions to better understand the issues and asks. Check out the step by step instructions, and then follow up with your local candidates who haven’t responded! This should be fun and educational. Questions? Contact Donna at CWA at dhoffman@calwic.org.

**WIC Business-Community Alliance**

After the November election, CWA will launch an ongoing phase of the We Need WIC Campaign: the WIC Business-Community Alliance. This effort will involve reaching out to partners in every corner of our communities, asking those who favor full funding of the WIC program to endorse a statement of support. WIC impacts—and cannot succeed without the involvement of—everyone around us, from grocers and other business owners to medical and education professionals. Each community member is as important to WIC’s success as the food vouchers and nutrition education that our WIC participants receive. CWA will use this support statement and composite endorsements to show our leaders in California and Washington just how extensive WIC’s impact is, and how essential it is to protect and preserve WIC’s funding in the present and future.

**How to get involved:** Look for emails and further communications from CWA this fall and winter for how you can get involved reaching out to your community, and forming strong ties with our partners and allies.

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CWA is participating with other California nonprofits in this unique get-out-the-vote effort, and we invite all of you in nonprofit WIC agencies to join us! Find more information at [http://calnonprofits.org/advocacy/voteyourmission](http://calnonprofits.org/advocacy/voteyourmission). And all WIC agencies can encourage staff and participants to

1) register to vote by October 22 and 2) vote on November 6.
WIC Can Help – New Toolkits Coming Soon!

You may be familiar already with the resource and referral information available on CWA’s WIC Can Help web page: http://calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-can-help. We update each month’s information at least annually, so you have easy access to current resources for WIC participants who might need additional assistance with food, housing, finances, or health care, to name a few.

Soon to come: new ways to share information on two WIC Can Help topics: CalFresh and Summer Lunch. With support from The California Endowment, CWA has developed new toolkits to help you share critical information about these underutilized programs with WIC families.

Each kit includes:
- A short DVD in English and Spanish (and soon, Chinese) designed to be shown in waiting rooms
- Reproducible flyers to distribute to participants, or information about where to obtain flyers from the program source
- Step-by-step instructions and suggestions for use
- A brief survey to help you give us feedback

CWA will mail CalFresh and Summer Lunch toolkits to each WIC agency in early November. Materials will also be available for download on our website. Although the WIC Can Help Resource and Referral Calendar designates CalFresh as the April topic and Summer Lunch in May, we want to allow agencies to plan the use of materials in advance; plus, families can benefit from CalFresh year-round.

We are especially grateful to Alejandra Arellano of SLAHP WIC, Michelle Turner of CAP Kern WIC, and Grace Yee of San Francisco WIC for their very capable assistance with translating and narrating the DVDs. We invite you to use these in the best way for your clinics and participants, and let us know how it goes! Questions or comments? Contact Margaret Aumann at maumann@calwic.org or (530) 750-2280.

SAVE THE DATE!
CWA Annual Conference & Trade Show
April 21-24, 2013
Fairmont Hotel – San Jose

Connect with us!

Like us on Facebook and share your WIC agency activities on our timeline! Follow us on Twitter, too! Read our blog at www.calwic.org!
Legislative Update

State Bills
SB 1190 (Hancock) - WIC EBT
SB 1190 is effectively dead for the Legislative year. It would have required the Department of Public Health to provide two annual updates on the status of WIC EBT implementation, and would have helped modernize the WIC program with electronic benefits transfer (EBT) capabilities. Unfortunately, this bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Despite our disappointment in this outcome, we are grateful for Senator Hancock’s support, optimistic about the continued discussion on WIC EBT implementation, and confident that all partners will continue to work effectively and efficiently to expedite EBT implementation.

AB 2386 (Allen) - Breastfeeding Discrimination
We are excited that AB 2386 passed out of both houses and is waiting on Governor Brown’s desk for signature! This bill would make it unlawful under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act to discriminate against women for breastfeeding. Currently, it is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of sex, which includes, gender, pregnancy, childbirth and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. This bill would provide that the term “sex” includes breastfeeding or medical conditions related to breastfeeding.

Enactment of AB 2386 would be a step toward more acceptance of breastfeeding as the natural way to feed babies and protecting the civil rights of mothers and babies to breastfeed. The Governor has 30 days from receiving the bill to make a decision. At press time, we eagerly await his decision!

Federal Update: WIC and the Fiscal Cliff
At press time, Washington, DC is still fighting the endless budget battle. By the end of 2012, Congress must decide whether to let a combination of tax increases and spending cuts go into effect: the so-called “fiscal cliff” of sequestration. The resulting 8.2% reduction for the WIC program would force states to terminate about 750,000 nationwide (over 123,000 in California alone) participants and drastically curtail WIC’s reach.

The November elections will guide this critical decision, when voters will have a very clear choice when it comes to picking candidates who support the WIC Program. President Obama’s proposed budget continues to adequately fund WIC at current levels. Governor Romney’s choice of Rep. Paul Ryan as his running mate concerns many in the WIC community: as chair of the House Budget Committee, Ryan proposed sweeping cuts to low-income programs as well as MediCare.

As the DC scene unfolds over the next six months, Congressional leaders have agreed to keep the government—including WIC—operating with a Continuing Resolution until March, but details won’t be worked out until after the elections.
**New WIC Baby Magazine: Out and About**

*Out and About*, the third in the WIC baby magazine series, is now available! Topics include developmental stages, baby cues, baby-proofing the home, breastfeeding while returning to work or school, choosing childcare, going out with baby, breastfeeding in public, and tips for moms to take care of themselves.

The WIC magazine series covers the following age ranges:

- **Bringing Home Baby** — birth to six weeks
- **Out and About** — six weeks to six months
- **Let’s Eat** — six months to one year

California WIC is collaborating with the National WIC Association and publishing company Meredith Corporation to develop the magazines. Supporting current WIC nutrition education and breastfeeding guidelines, the magazines provide evidence-based recommendations in an easy-reading style. They are colorful, ad-free, and available in English and Spanish.

WIC staff is using the magazines in many effective ways:

- Discussing in classes
- Sharing at individual education contacts
- Displaying in waiting areas
- Distributing via breastfeeding peer counselors

Participants are enthusiastic about the magazines, describing them as informative, fun and entertaining.

Many thanks to these local WIC agencies for participating in field-testing *Out and About*: Placer County, Delta Health Care, Solano County, Yolo County, Community Bridges, and Santa Clara County.

Extend and reinforce your nutrition education by using all three magazines! Order using OSP Order Form # 527: Magazines. Questions? Contact Poppy Strode at margaret.strode@cdph.ca.gov.

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**Let’s Cook with Kids Cookbooks are here!**

Yes, it’s true: your agency can now order these fantastic cookbooks—displayed at the 2012 CWA Annual Conference—from the Office of State Publishing (OSP). Developed by Northeast Valley Health Corporation WIC, *Let’s Cook with Kids/Vamos a Cocinar con los Niños* is filled with healthy and yummy kid-friendly recipes, written in English and Spanish. Kids (and the kid in all of us) will love the colorful photos of each recipe and the fun ideas for eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. You’ll find recipes for breakfast foods, snacks, main dishes, side dishes, and desserts. Start making your shopping list and try some of the recipes at home so you can tell WIC participants how great they are! If you haven’t seen the cookbook yet, check it out online: [http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-CookingWithChildren-LetsCookWithKids.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Documents/NE/WIC-NE-CookingWithChildren-LetsCookWithKids.pdf)
GIS Tools to Inform California WIC Program Decisions

Hot-Spot Analyses and Online WIC Maps

Geographic information systems (GIS) have eased their way into California WIC’s collective consciousness over the course of the past two years. By now, WIC managers and staff in all counties likely have received GIS maps that include spatial data highlighting WIC services, WIC clients, and WIC-eligible non-participants. State WIC and the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program collaborated to map approximately 700 WIC Centers, 5,000 WIC Vendors, and 30,000 WIC-eligible non-participants across the state. Counts, densities and rates of unmet WIC service needs on the local, county, and state level are portrayed in thematic maps.

During the past year, our GIS and spatial analyses have gotten more complex. As leaders Dr. Thomas Stopka (MCAH) and Dr. Pat Gradziel (WIC) report, state staff has developed numerous hot-spot cluster analyses and maps. These cluster analyses help to locate WIC-eligible participants who are in need of enhanced public health services. Hot-spots (red zones on the map below) and cold-spots (blue zones) represent clusters of California census tracts where the density of WIC-eligible non-participants is significantly higher or lower than the average density for the state or county.

Through the WIC-MCAH collaboration, we have also used the Python coding language to automate production of GIS maps for all 58 California counties—a process that reduces map production time by approximately 30 hours—allowing us to get maps to local WIC agencies more quickly and efficiently.

Our newest tool is using web-based GIS mapping platform to create online GIS maps. These interactive maps (see above screenshot) juxtapose WIC services and sociodemographic variables, allowing WIC stakeholders across California to assess availability of local services within diverse communities on personal computers, smartphones, and computer pads. We hope that these interactive maps will provide local agencies with the tools to determine local service needs, and to guide future client outreach and enrollment.

Local Agency Experiences

Maureen Clark reports: In 2011, Community Resource Project, Inc. WIC Program opened two new WIC offices and relocated a third. Initially—and prior to the release of GIS maps—we utilized available data sets to identify locations of our new sites. GIS mapping tools confirmed our selections, revealing high levels of unmet need in the area. Maps including Hot Spot Analysis, Dot Density of Women per Census Tract

continued on next page
Worksite Wellness

GIS Tools

continued from page 7

Level (including those not receiving WIC and WIC-eligible) as well as demographic maps (i.e., families in poverty) were the most helpful and useful in securing our sites.

Our new offices have grown quickly as we shift staff to offices with the most growth potential, confirming the importance of using such tools to help grow caseload. Since then, we have utilized GIS maps to help target our outreach efforts, focusing time and energy towards specific neighborhoods and apartment complexes. As of August 2012, we reached 100.6% of our caseload for August—an increase of 15% from July!

Heather Howard reports: In rural Shasta County WIC, we used GIS data to map the location of our current clients and the office they go to. We needed to close our main office because caseload was dropping and the “satellite” office in town was seeing more clients. The GIS data helped us prove to our County Board of Supervisors that this change was needed. We made the “satellite” office the new main office and then opened another WIC clinic in a part of town where a large cluster of our clients lived. This move helped us keep our caseload high; we were one of the few local agencies to receive a caseload increase in the past few months. Co-locating WIC services with CalFresh and other programs and allowing walk-ins at any time probably helped our caseload, too.

Wellness is...Sharing a Meal

The Temecula WIC clinic professionals take pride in their great teamwork. Not only is teamwork important to accomplishing their everyday site goals (like maintaining number one breastfeeding rates and meeting caseload), but they use teamwork to motivate each other to reach their individual wellness goals.

One way that Temecula WIC staff walks the talk and helps each other get motivated to eat healthier and get in shape is with group meals. Since February, Site Wellness Coordinator Lucia Ward has created a weekly menu for breakfast and lunch. It was a team decision that each employee pitch in $15 a week for groceries. Lucy volunteers to purchase the food, such as fresh vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains. Then, as “staff chef,” she arrives at work early to cook hearty breakfasts, and prepares tasty lunches on her lunch break.

Lucy became the site Wellness Coordinator at the end of 2009, fueled by her desire to lose postpartum weight. When asked what motivates her to prepare staff meals on her own time, Lucy replies, “Coordinating and leading wellness activities fulfills me and brings me a sense of accomplishment. I like to see my co-workers benefit from these healthy activities.”

Lucy is glad to be Temecula WIC’s chef “as long as I don’t have to clean,” she says. The other 7-12 employees share the daily cleaning duties, which they don’t mind when they have their own personal chef! They meet briefly each day to agree on staggered lunch breaks that support wellness activities without disrupting service at the WIC site.

Paired with physical activity at staff meetings, on breaks, and beyond the work day, the group meals create an encouraging, family-like environment that motivates all staff members to continue working toward wellness. As the Temecula team reminds us, “Sometimes you just have to change it up, be creative, and have fun in order to obtain your goals. When you feel like you’re part of a team, you’re more likely to succeed.”

Together Each Achieves More

“Chef Lucy” (far left) and her Temecula WIC team enjoy a healthy lunch at work.
**CWA Walks the Talk**

This past year, staff at CWA “headquarters” has stepped up to wellness by walking the talk... literally! Many of us walk a two-mile loop from the office on most Tuesdays and Thursdays. At press time, we’ve completed at least eight of the Ten Steps for WIC Worksite Wellness (WWW) and expect to achieve certification before the end of 2012.

CWA provides each employee an annual reimbursement that can now go towards gym membership or other wellness expenses as well as the traditional out-of-pocket health care payments. Offering this incentive and providing a healthy work environment that promotes physical activity and healthy eating has touched our lives in myriad ways.

“I feel really lucky to work for an organization that values my health and well-being. It goes beyond the freedom to stretch our legs and get some fresh air. CWA encourages other healthy habits that I can take home to my family. It makes me a more productive team member and a happier, healthier person in general.”

—Meghan Saddler

All summer long, several staff members shared their weight loss and fitness achievements, while others brought in fresh produce from home gardens or CSA boxes with recipes to share. On our own time, we swim, take yoga classes, bicycle, hike, and/or do circuit training to keep up healthy and active lifestyles. It’s fun and encouraging to ask each other, “How was your workout?”

Last spring, some of us joined the President’s Challenge for additional motivation. This free program aims to encourage all Americans to “make being active part of their everyday lives” and to be physically fit. Participants can track progress online and order a certificate of achievement after reaching their goal. Check it out at [www.presidentschallenge.org/](http://www.presidentschallenge.org/).

At the office or on our own time, we at CWA have taken the worksite wellness culture to heart. And it’s no secret that we get our inspiration from those of you practicing wellness at local WIC agencies. Keep up the healthy habits! Contact Teresa Morris at CWA or visit [www.calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksite-wellness](http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksite-wellness) for information and inspiration.

“As a member of a CSA program (Community Supported Agriculture), I pick up a big box of fresh, local produce every Friday afternoon. Every week I get a variety of local fruits and veggies, along with recipe ideas and information from the farm. It allows me to always have a flow of delicious produce, and experiment with new veggies that I might not otherwise pick out at the grocery store or farmers’ market. Plus, it is so cost effective! I pay $14 a week for a huge box of fresh fruits and veggies—can’t beat that!”

—Donna Hoffman
Leading the Way in Oakland

Breastfeeding counseling is part of the Preventive Services provided in health care reform, and East and West Oakland Health Centers are early adopters! International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) will now provide breastfeeding support for pregnant and postpartum women in the clinic sites.

Aiming to build a better continuum of care for the mothers served, the lactation consultants will reach mothers and their families prenatally by organizing outreach with CPSP coordinators and through referral from the midwives and doctors. Hospital discharge planning after birth will include referral to the lactation consultants and other services for essential support in the first few days and enhance the support provided through WIC.

In addition, collaboration with Family Health Services programs may provide enhanced breastfeeding support in home visiting care. The IBCLCs will provide clinic staff in-service training, as well as collaboration with WIC and the community Breastfeeding Cultural Outreach Taskforce (see related article in the Summer 2012 WIC Watch, page 8).

Overall, this effort aims to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. A grant from the Kaiser Permanent Community Benefit Program enables the clinic to tap into funding for IBCLCs through health plan coverage. For more information contact Norma Mason at NormaM@wohc.org or Jeanne Kettles at jeanne.kettles@acgov.org.

Rolling Out Preventive Services

Although the Supreme Court decision last June largely upheld the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more challenges could arise depending on election outcomes. Despite uncertainties, many improvements in health care coverage have taken place and more are set to come in 2014 and beyond.

What has this meant for Californians?

- About 435,000 Californians age 19-26 kept health insurance under their parents’ plans.
- About 11,000 Californians with serious medical conditions have coverage.
- Children under 19 years old cannot be denied coverage for pre-existing conditions.
- No lifetime limits of coverage apply to new policies.
- Preventive services for women in commercial health plans became effective August 1.

What is coming for Californians in 2014?

- Individuals must have insurance through an employer, Medi-Cal, or purchased on their own.
- Large employers must provide insurance or face penalties.
- The California Health Benefit Exchange will provide a place for individuals to compare plans and enroll for insurance.
- Qualifying individuals, families and small businesses will receive federal subsidies to offset costs of insurance purchases.
- Medi-Cal eligibility will be expanded.

Good things for Women, Children and Families!

With preventive services part of the ACA, families will benefit from services like obesity counseling, vaccinations, and Type 2 Diabetes screening at no cost sharing. These benefits will (or already have) become effective, depending on one’s health coverage.

For women under commercial health plans, additional preventive services kicked in August 1, including gestational diabetes screening and lactation support. Find out what preventive services are available under your health plan!

Where to get ‘easy-to-understand’ updates:

Affordable Health Care Federal Website: www.healthcare.gov
California HealthCare Foundation: www.chcf.org
Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation: www.kff.org

Oakland IBCLCs Jessica Lee, Allana Samuel, DJuna Blackmon, Brandi Gates, and Tanefer Lumukanda join coordinator Jeanne Kettles, WIC Regional Breastfeeding Liaison, to celebrate their new roles.
Local Agency News

CNC Scholar: Liliana Prado Nava

Like a number of young people, Liliana Prado Nava, recipient of the 2012 Anne Peterson Memorial Scholarship, started college with one career in mind and finished with another. California WIC is fortunate that she dropped her pharmacy school plans and discovered dietetics at UC Davis. Liliana thought she’d then complete a dietetic internship or find a clinical position, but landed her first job at the Merced County CAA WIC Program. It’s there that she realized how much she enjoyed community nutrition and the positive impact she could have in public health.

Fast forward to Fall 2012, and we find Liliana with nearly three years’ work experience in WIC, having completed training as a lactation specialist, and finishing her dietetic internship with Bowling Green State University. The distance-learning format of her internship allowed Liliana to stay in California’s Central Valley, where she lives and works, and continue learning about community nutrition services and how they are networked. And with a California Nutrition Corps (CNC) Scholarship, she was able to continue working in WIC during her internship.

“The dietetic internship has helped me understand more how nutrition impacts health,” says Liliana. “Seeing complications from conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes—conditions that can be greatly improved by following a healthy diet—has increased my commitment to working in the field. Eating habits developed during childhood and infancy really can have a great impact on adult health.”

In the long term, one of Liliana’s goals is to become a Certified Diabetic Educator. She sees family members living with type 2 diabetes and knows that better nutrition can improve their quality of life. Liliana’s bilingual skills and personal knowledge of health challenges faced by members of her community drive her strong desire to help and to continue learning about how dietetics professionals can have a positive influence.

Her internship director, Christine Haar, puts it this way: “Liliana’s [work] geared toward the low income audience shows her empathy and understanding of their needs. [Others] note her ability to establish rapport with Spanish speaking clients and her passion for tackling the profound health disparities found in the Central Valley.” Congratulations, Liliana, for such a stellar beginning to your career. We’re glad you discovered WIC!

Coming Soon: 2013 CNC Scholarships!

The California Nutrition Corps scholarship fund supports employees of California local WIC programs who are advancing their professional careers within the WIC program. Applicants must be currently employed in a WIC program for at least six continuous months and enrolled in a dietetic internship, undergraduate, or graduate program. Important dates:

November 1, 2012 ............... Applications available online
January 16, 2013 .............. Completed applications due
February 28, 2013 ............ Awardees notified

For full details, visit http://www.calwic.org/focus-areas/cnc-scholarships. Questions? Contact Teresa Morris at tmorris@calwic.org or (530) 750-2280.
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SHARE THE LINK!

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