Catch a WAVE and Ride It!

After years of planning and anticipation, the time has finally come to rollout the California WIC Card and WIC Web Information System Exchange (WIC WISE). Immediately following the conference, local agencies in the pilot Wave, followed by local agencies in ten successive Waves across California, will begin issuing benefits on electronic debit cards and using a web-based information system. By late April of next year we will have accomplished this historic transition. Many opportunities at the conference will add to the ongoing staff training and communications. Awesome team work!

In true WIC spirit state programs and local agencies are diligently working on other waves of changes, such as on-line appointments, electronic document signing, family support coordinators, and other examples, which will be presented at the conference. It is vital these efforts are shared across California and the nation, in order to more quickly and effectively implement change and scale improvements.

What feels like a tidal wave are the threats to immigrant families, low-income communities, and safety net programs. WIC will persist knowing our mission is vital to the health and future of California and the country. This year is critically important for educating state and federal lawmakers on the proven outcomes and invaluable investment of local WIC programs. Invite your representatives to your agency to witness the riptide of challenges, strategic improvements, and impactful services for their constituents.

We hope you enjoy this Conference Edition of the WIC Watch, which highlights conference presentations, also found on our website, and also the reports of good work going on in local agencies to create partnerships, support employee wellness, and promote WIC.

Surf’s up! It is our time to catch this set and ride it out!
The next few years will be historic for WIC! This year’s conference will showcase the wave of improvements and innovations that include new technology and fresh perspectives on engaging and sustaining WIC participants. You will hear critical updates, learn about topics ranging from implicit bias to immigration, take home applicable knowledge for serving your community, like early childhood nutrition, culturally competent outreach and inclusivity, and learn about research being done on homelessness, preventing preterm births, marijuana use during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and more. WIC leadership will be front and center with many opportunities to absorb best practices and model policies. We are stronger together. We can lift all of us up, and move families forward! This will be integral to our message. Together we will work towards building vibrant communities and strengthening our resolve to collaborate and find solutions. Welcome! We hope you are ready to learn and enjoy colleagues as we create the WIC program for today’s families!

TWO PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINARS Seminars provide continuing education on Sunday to inspire and update your professional practice. Plan to spend in-depth time with top-notch experts at one of these concurrent seminars:

- **Innovative Strategies to Improve Child Feeding Practices** with Jane Heinig, PhD, IBCLC, Professor and Executive Director of the UC Davis Human Lactation Center and Katie Ferraro, MPH, RDN, CDE, Associate Professor of Nutrition at the UC San Francisco School of Nursing.

- **Creating the Wave: WIC Innovations and Streamlining – Promising Practices and Lessons Learned**, facilitated by Linnea Sallack, Altarum Institute and Zoë Neuberger, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, with guest speakers from local and state agencies from Arizona, California, Colorado, and Oklahoma.

PLENARY SPEAKERS share their energy and expertise with us on Monday:

- **Dr. Flojaune G. Cofer**, PhD, MPH, Senior Director of Policy at Public Health Advocates. Dr. Cofer will talk with us about racial disparities in health and how that is affecting our WIC participants.

- **Brian Dittmeier**, Esq., Senior Public Policy Counsel, National WIC Association will be giving us updates on the federal WIC budget process and other national policy.

- **Lorrene Ritchie**, PhD, Director, Nutrition Policy Institute, and Cooperative Extension Specialist, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California & Shannon Whaley, PhD, Director of Research and Evaluation, PHEF WIC. These guest speakers will talk to us about participant retention and help us to better understand reasons for discontinuing WIC benefits.

- **Nicole Henley**, PhD, MBA, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Science and Human Ecology, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). Dr. Henley will speak about social determinants of health and how to reduce health disparities in vulnerable populations through the use of culturally responsive evaluation.

- **Dr. Jo Lichten**, PhD, RDN, CSP, will bring it all together and send us off ready to build on our resilience, and manage stress through a time of transformational change.

**NEXT STEPS:** If you couldn’t join us this year, visit the CWA conference web page to download select presentation materials, available only through June. Then, plan to join us at the 2020 Annual Conference & Trade Show, April 5 - 8, 2020. Once again we’ll be at the Town & Country Resort in San Diego to learn, network, and recharge — together!
You can look forward to **FIVE CONCURRENT WORKSHOP TRACKS**, planned by a dedicated committee of your peers, and designed to bring you professional renewal and continuing education in nutrition, lactation, leadership, wellness, diversity, equity, strategic collaboration, program innovation, and preparing for eWIC implementation:

1. Begin Early to Nurture Child Health
2. Lead & Manage to Promote Wellness
3. Equity for ALL Families
4. Innovate & Collaborate to Advance WIC
5. Welcome Change for eWIC Success

Conference attendees can engage with top speakers on a variety of subjects. Here are just a few:

- Dr. Lisa Stellwagen and Dr. Christina Chambers from UCSD will talk about the impact of **maternal substance use during pregnancy and lactation**.
- Jadah Parks Chatterjee, RN, IBCLC, will talk about promoting diversity among lactation professionals to increase breastfeeding support for all families.
- Dr. Sayida Peprah will empower us with breastfeeding as a radical act and reflect on research findings of Black Women Birthing Justice in breastfeeding in the black community.
- Katherine Pryor, MA, author of the children’s books Sylvia’s Spinach, Zora’s Zucchini, and the recently-released Bea’s Bee, will show us how **growing food literacy connects kids, books, and food**.
- State WIC and OSI staff will have many opportunities for attendees to learn more about WIC Wise and get prepared for the **WIC Card rollout**.

Gain more insights from our pre-conference and plenary presenters and panels, on **civility in the workplace, how to create father friendly WIC programs, housing & food security, client retention strategies, screening for sexual orientation and gender identity, and a deeper look at immigration issues**. View the full agenda here: [http://www.calwic.org/events/annual-conference-trade-show/](http://www.calwic.org/events/annual-conference-trade-show/).

Whichever workshops you choose, be sure and take back to your colleagues new knowledge, tools, and best practices for continuing your work together to collaborate and innovate, support diversity and equity, and nurture wellness among coworkers and the families you serve.

**TRADE SHOW & EXHIBITS**, featuring over 60 booths and more dedicated viewing time, giving you a chance to see, feel, taste, and try out new foods, clinical products, and publications from industry reps. You can learn about key government programs, community resources, and nonprofit services, all while networking with your colleagues and partners. NEW to the tradeshow this year will be **Tradeshow Talks**. These will allow industries and organizations an opportunity to share important data, research, insights, and strategies in short 15-minute presentations.

Don’t forget to connect with your WIC peers at **Local Agency Sharing Exhibits**, concurrent with the Trade Show, and learn about wellness, innovative service models, and other ways to improve your program.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Another NEW feature at this year’s conference will be Trivia Night. Join us on Tuesday evening for a little friendly peer competition. **Wave Catcher’s Trivia Night** will be hosted by Lou the Lifeguard (CWA Project Coordinator’s alter ego) and sponsored by Prime Time Nutrition and Quickeroo. Teams of eight will be able to flex their WIC knowledge and pop cultural expertise, while vying to be the best of the best. Dressing up in Hawaiian shirts and beachy outfits strongly encouraged (and you might even win a prize).

Many of you practice **WIC Worksite Wellness** at your own worksites, and keeping fit and alert at the conference should be no different. Rise and shine each day and get your day started right with Self-defense, Tai Chi, Yoga, and ZUMBA. And don’t forget to Move to the Groove during Wednesday’s plenary break.

Additionally, we look forward to honoring several local agencies certified and recertified this year as **Well WIC Worksites**. Can you find all the fruit and veggie signs around the Town and Country for prizes? **Sign your team up (or do it solo) for CWA Go!** CWA GO begins bright and shiny at 8am on Monday, April 28. TEAMS pick up their game packets at registration, and individual game cards will be available at registration as well.

So, get your Hawaiian shirts ready and dig your summer clothes out of your closet! Anybody that dresses with a “Beach Theme” during the conference is welcome to pick up a raffle ticket at registration. You will be entered to win a number of cool prizes! Winning tickets will be drawn and announced throughout the conference, so catch the Wave and surf’s up!
Partnering with Head Start

WIC agencies routinely communicate with local child care and early education programs to share information, promote referrals, and maximize participation. In 1994 and updated in 2017, a memorandum of understanding between USDA, Food and Nutrition Services, WIC, and the Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care Administration, Administration for Children and Families, Dept. of Health and Human Services, was released with information on establishing collaborations. Since that time, in several states, there has been renewed work to build more collaborative arrangements and identify challenges when different federal departments work in new ways. CWA is pleased to share Strengthening Linkages Between California’s WIC and Child Care Services providing background, examples and recommendations for improved WIC and Head Start linkages for California.

Nutrition Preventive Services: A Low-Cost Approach to Improve Health

Despite all the pushback on the ACA as a law, a large part of its foundation focusing on prevention and cost savings, is transforming health care. Nutrition is fundamental to health and a key disease prevention strategy. Unfortunately, very little has been invested in nutrition counseling and support in health care or through health plans. CWA is pleased to provide a cost analysis, Perinatal Nutrition Counseling Services for Low-Income Women in California, and Preventive Nutrition Services: Joining Health Reform with a Low-Cost Approach to Improve Health, addressing the lack of nutrition counseling and support for anyone, outside of WIC services, and recommendations for building access.

WIC staff present a very valuable public health nutrition workforce. Local agency staff are highly knowledgeable, skilled counselors and educators, and culturally and linguistically competent and diverse. Opportunities exist for local WIC agencies to be more integrated in health care, sharing staff in diabetes and perinatal care, and obesity and chronic disease treatment and prevention.
Breastfeeding advocates and hospital staff may be a bit surprised to see the slowdown in breastfeeding rates improvement trends, as described in the recently released, *Sustaining Change in Challenging Times, California Needs Innovative Breastfeeding Support Systems*, biannual hospital report and annual fact sheets.

As reported in 2016, policy improvements in California hospitals resulted in greater numbers of women throughout the state still breastfeeding exclusively as they leave the hospital. Local, regional, and statewide efforts brought needed change to policies and practices, resulting in improvements in perinatal care in the majority of our hospitals. For decades, California has provided national leadership in the promotion and support of breastfeeding. Let's not break that momentum!

California’s Department of Public Health Newborn Screening Program 2017 data is showing that our progress is slowing as described in the recent hospital report and county facts sheets and highlight the reasons for this slowdown. Working together in communities, hospital staff, Regional Perinatal Program nurses, WIC Regional Breastfeeding Liaisons, and breastfeeding coalition members can identify pathways to continued improvement.

Join our prompt call to action and help us identify the innovative strategies needed to reinvigorate efforts throughout our large and diverse state, so that the lasting benefits of breastfeeding may be available to all California mothers and infants.

To access the report and fact sheets: http://www.calwic.org/what-we-do/breastfeeding-advocacy/hospital-breastfeeding-rates-reports/.
Federal Policy Updates

Telling WIC Stories in Washington DC

One of the most important things we can do to promote continued support and protection of WIC at the federal level is to ensure that our policymakers understand WIC and the benefits it brings to their constituents and communities. The tense political climate did not daunt 38 California WIC Ambassadors – including five WIC moms – as they visited all Congressional representatives in Washington DC last March to provide WIC program education. After attendees participated in the annual National WIC Association Washington Leadership Conference — hearing federal updates on the budget, immigration, the maternal mortality crisis African-American mothers face, and more — they stormed Capitol Hill to tell the WIC story. With plenty of convincing data, facts and family stories, these WIC Ambassadors easily described how WIC works and put a human face to families in need.

CWA Leadership Recognized

Another highlight of the National WIC Association’s Washington Leadership Conference was the Leadership Award for Advocacy presented to Sarah Diaz of CWA. She earned the award for her work in bringing attention to the issue of the proposed changes to the public charge immigration rule and its effect on WIC, especially through her work with journalists. Equally deserving of the credit for this work are the courageous moms who told their stories and spoke to reporters on behalf of their communities as well as themselves.

Federal Budget Update

At press time, there are two steps before Congress can pass an Agriculture Appropriations bill that sets WIC funding for FY 2020. First, Congress must come to a deal to lift the budget caps, which will set the overall funding number for all non-defense discretionary programs. As part of that process, Congress will consider the 302(b) allocations – the total funding number for each appropriations subcommittee. Then, Congress must consider individual appropriations bills, including the Agriculture Appropriations bill that sets WIC funding. Since House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer hopes to begin moving appropriations bills in June, the two deals are being negotiated on a parallel track. The President’s Budget proposal in March projected that WIC participation will continue to decline (to 6.6 million participants) and recommended a cut in WIC funding to a total of $5.75 billion (a reduction of $325 million, plus a $1 billion rescission of unspent food funds). The National WIC Association continues to advocate for robust WIC funding at $6.15 billion, with an increase in Breastfeeding Peer Counselor funding and the WIC contingency fund.
State Policy Updates

One of the roles that CWA fills on behalf of local WIC agencies and families is that of advocate for improvements in all sectors of government and society that impact the WIC program. This work involves varied partners and multiple strategies, from rules and resolutions to bills and budgets.

WIC Linkages

CWA continues to explore ways to support and advocate for WIC to electronically link to health and social services. These linkages, although badly needed, are quite challenging from the data and technology perspectives. As participants of the Horizontal Integration workgroup and the Children’s Health Coverage Coalition, state WIC staff, CWA, and other stakeholder groups help ensure WIC is included in ongoing efforts.

State Bills

CWA will be supporting a number of bills addressing relevant issues, including:

- Lactation accommodation in the workplace
- Access to fresh, local produce for CalFresh participants
- School meals for low-income students
- Early Childhood Education


Budget Requests

Last year, CWA and the California Breastfeeding Coalition co-sponsored a state budget proposal to increase the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate for breast pumps carried by Assemblymember Rubio’s office. Although we were able to raise awareness of the issue, we were ultimately not successful, which is why we’re trying again this year!

Welcome California’s First Surgeon General

Adverse childhood experiences – or ACEs – and their long-term consequences on physical and mental health have been at the forefront of determining best practices in the social services world for years. That’s why it was very exciting to the WIC community to hear that the new Governor had named pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, a pioneer in the study of ACEs, as the state’s first surgeon general. Burke Harris created a screening tool for pediatricians to detect ACEs, helping them interpret the results and direct children and caregivers to appropriate treatment services. She has also played a big role in bringing the science of ACEs to a wider audience. In 2016 she was awarded the Heinz Award for the Human Condition, and last year, her book about ACEs, “The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity,” was featured on NPR and at the New York Times. A September 2014 Ted Talk she gave, “How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime” has been viewed nearly 5 million times.

Governor Newsom’s appointment of Burke Harris comes with a budget proposal that includes several proposed investments in early intervention and prevention supports and services; $60 million to offer early developmental screenings for children in next year’s budget, as well as $45 million to identify ACEs among children and adults enrolled in Medi-Cal.

Welch’s is proud to be a Gold Sponsor of the California WIC Association’s 2019 Annual Conference!
Stay Tuned, WIC News is on the Way!

CDPH/WIC is committed to keeping our key stakeholders informed about the exciting changes coming to the California WIC Program, which will have a positive impact on WIC families, local agencies, and grocers. The monthly publication, WIC News, provides information about the transition to the California WIC Card and WIC WISE (WIC Web Information System Exchange). CDPH/WIC produces three versions of the monthly publication, each targeting a specific key stakeholder audience:

- WIC Local Agencies
- WIC Authorized Vendors
- Community Partners and Stakeholders

As a continuance of WIC News, CDPH/WIC produces a broadcast to mirror the content featured in each month’s WIC News publication. The broadcast is a recorded video that provides more detailed information from each publication’s featured topics. CDPH/WIC produces one version of the monthly broadcast, targeting WIC local agencies as their audience. A new 10 to 15 minute broadcast is made available each month to deliver relevant updates to all WIC local agency staff in preparation for the arrival of the California WIC Card and WIC WISE.

WIC News can be found on the CDPH/WIC website at www.wicworks.ca.gov under the “WIC Card – It’s Coming” tab. Look out for the purple bar, indicating that the WIC News is tailored for local agency staff. For questions about the WIC News publications and broadcasts, please contact us at WICcard@cdph.ca.gov.

Stay Tuned with WIC Card/WIC WISE Webinars

To communicate important project updates and training information to local agencies, CDPH/WIC hosts a monthly WIC Card / Staff move on break time! WIC WISE Webinar that will help prepare agencies for using WIC WISE and issuing the California WIC Card. Each webinar will also feature a spotlight of a function in the new WIC WISE system.

A recording of each WIC Card / WIC WISE Webinar and future webinar dates can be found on the Local Agency SharePoint Site (LASS) under the eWIC tile. For questions about the WIC Card / WIC WISE Webinar series, please contact us at WICcard@cdph.ca.gov.
How WIC Families Will Learn About Upcoming Program Changes

CDPH/WIC is working with local agencies on a number of methods and tools to ensure WIC families will be informed about the change from WIC paper checks to the California WIC Card. These materials include:

- It’s Coming WIC Identification Folder (WIF) insert for local agencies to distribute 6 months prior to Go Live
- It’s Coming posters for local agencies to post 6 months prior to Go Live
- It’s Coming short video clip for local agencies to show in their offices or at the end of classes prior to their Go Live date
- Social media messaging that local agencies can use on their social media platforms
- Messages that local agencies can use to communicate with participants, such as text messages
- WIC Card brochure for local agencies to distribute beginning on their Go Live
- It’s Here posters for local agencies to post at Go Live
- Video and lesson plan to teach participants how to shop with the WIC Card (when participants receive their first WIC Card)

For questions about any materials listed above, please contact us at WICcard@cdph.ca.gov.

Coming Soon—the California WIC App!

CDPH/WIC is excited to announce the coming of the California WIC App, downloadable from Google Play or Apple Store. The California WIC App will be available to participants receiving the WIC Card and it will allow them to:

- Check their Food Balance— including current and future benefits
- Scan barcodes to see if a food is WIC Authorized and available in their Food Balance
- Access resource links including:
  - CDPH website to find information about eligibility, WIC foods, and more information about the WIC Card
  - WIC Mobile for breastfeeding support, Farmers’ Markets, and Welcome to WIC videos

The California WIC App will also be available to the public, not requiring a login, and will allow access to WIC locations, grocers, and the same resource links listed above.

For questions about the California WIC App, please contact us at WICcard@cdph.ca.gov.

It’s coming! The California WIC Card

Shopping with your WIC Card will be easier than using paper checks.

It’s coming! The California WIC Card

Shopping with your WIC Card will be easier than using paper checks.

It’s Here posters for local agencies to post at Go Live

Video and lesson plan to teach participants how to shop with the WIC Card (when participants receive their first WIC Card)
MOMS Orange County Names PHFE WIC as 2019 Champion for Babies & Families Awardee

In January, PHFE WIC, the largest nonprofit network of WIC centers in the U.S., was honored with MOMS Orange County’s Champion for Babies & Families award at their Santa Ana offices. MOMS Orange County, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving low-income pregnant women and young families for more than 26 years, launched the Champion for Babies & Families award in 2018 to honor and celebrate Orange County employers that create working environments which are exceptionally supportive of expectant employees and new families.

PHFE WIC, a program of Heluna Health, clearly leads the service sector in best practices in supporting its expecting employees and new parents. All eight WIC centers in Orange County are breastfeeding-friendly work centers with private pumping stations, electric pumps, refrigerators and flexible work time for pumping. Their employee Perinatal Support Program for pregnant and breastfeeding employees includes early pregnancy classes and prenatal support groups. When an employee has a baby, the family has access to a breastfeeding support coach and lactation consultant as employees are encouraged to pump during work hours for baby’s first year. In 2017, 100% of employees initiated breastfeeding and 92% maintained exclusive breastfeeding for their baby’s first year of life.

“As a leader in breastfeeding support services and nutrition education for families, we are thrilled to receive the ‘Champion for Babies & Families Award,’ said Kiran Saluja, MPH, RDN PHFE WIC Executive Director. “Breastfeeding education and support are a core WIC service; not only to the families we serve, but also to our employees who support the families we serve. PHFE WIC is committed to doing whatever it takes to help our staff succeed with healthy pregnancies and exclusive breastfeeding. When our staff is supported and successful, they, in turn, become passionate breastfeeding advocates for our participants. When we take care of our staff, they take care of our participants.”

Kiran Saluja, director of PHFE WIC, with Pamela Pimentel, CEO of MOMS Orange County

Breastfeeding education and support are a core WIC service; not only to the families we serve, but also to our employees who support the families we serve.
Co-Breastfeeding: It Takes a Village

Merced County Community Action Agency WIC Program has been working to make breastfeeding the norm for the entire community, helped along by the WIC Lactation Coordinator, Jacqueline Aguas, who has successfully obtained grants to expand breastfeeding services! In 2015 Memorial Hospital Los Banos granted initial funding for a WIC Peer Counselor. The hiring of the new peer counselor increased breastfeeding rates among 6 month old infants by 8%.

Partnerships between MCCAA WIC, First 5 Merced, and local hospitals are also generating new breastfeeding services and resources in Merced County. The October Art Hop in Merced had an exhibition of photo art featuring breastfeeding mothers.

WIC’s participation at Mercy Medical’s Stork Tour has opened the door for recruitment, and enrollment of new families on WIC. During the tour the Regional Breastfeeding Liaison presents WIC services to the soon to be parents.

Dawn Arnsberg from Mercy Medical Center made a presentation for the WIC staff on the status of their efforts in achieving Baby Friendly certification. Arnsberg reported that moms who receive WIC breastfeeding education tend to overcome the challenges, and leave the hospital exclusively breastfeeding.

The joint effort of the partnership between Mercy Medical Center and WIC has led to the establishment of a weekly Breastfeeding Café led by local mothers.

Mom and Baby Craft Time, a project funded by First 5 Merced, meets once per month to have open discussions about breastfeeding topics, and make a different craft every month; so far, moms have decorated a mason jar, made baby’s first Christmas ornament...... in the following months moms will participate in mom and baby Zumba!
The Grow Our Own (GOO) Lactation Consultant Program is a 105-hour college level course intended to assist WIC staff, health professionals and breastfeeding mothers in becoming International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, Certified Lactation Specialists or Lactation Consultants. Over the last 9 years, GOO has produced 388 graduates.

The 2019 class of GOO starting May 21, 2019 marks the 10th anniversary, since inception in 2009. In 2009 Riverside County received a grant from the California WIC Association and CDPH WIC to formalize a training in Riverside with additional funding available for a class in 2010. Under the leadership and guidance of Laurie Haessly (Retired 2015), Kathleen Pickering (Retired 2016) and our current Breastfeeding Coordinator Kayellen Young, IBCLC and Breastfeeding Coordinator for Riverside County WIC, we have started growing lactation consultants not only in our agency but throughout California and with a very high pass rate for the IBCLC Boards.

The GOO Course is designed to take each student to the next level of lactation expertise regardless of their background. Students beginning the lactation field will graduate as a Clinical Lactation Specialist.

The GOO class of 2018, which graduated in November, taught by Kayellen Young, consisting of 22 students, RNs, RDs, WNAs, DNs, Doulas and breastfeeding mommies. Good luck to everyone on all their endeavors with their newly-acquired knowledge and skill. For more information regarding the GOO Classes contact Kayellen Young at KYoung@ruhealth.org or visit our website at www.lovingsupport.org.

Members can now visit a doctor 24/7 using LiveHealth Online.

Using LiveHealth Online, Anthem Blue Cross Medi-Cal members talk to a board-certified doctor through live video on their smartphone, tablet or computer, for $0 per visit.

Anthem Blue Cross Medi-Cal is dedicated to increasing access to care for our members. Learn how at livehealth.com.

Download the free app:

![iOS App Store](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/livehealth-online/id1433489319)


LiveHealth Online is the trade name of Health Management Corporation, a separate company providing telehealth services on behalf of Anthem. Anthem Blue Cross is the trade name of Blue Cross of California, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Cross of California Partnership Plan, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Association. ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. Blue Cross of California is contracted with L.A. Care Health Plan to provide Medi-Cal Managed Care services in Los Angeles County.

Shout it Out!

Invite decision makers to your agency to learn about WIC.
- WIC WISE
- World Breastfeeding Month
- Honoring Dads
- Infant Feeding

Be loud & proud!


Questions: [Sarah sdiaz@calwic.org](mailto:sarah.sdiaz@calwic.org)
WIC Leadership Academy Redux!

Building on the success of the WIC Leadership Academy last year, we are excited to introduce the 2019 class! Rita Sever, again at the helm, will guide our new class of 28 capable and excited participants from 18 diverse agencies through a year-long journey of development through learning and personal growth. Congratulations to the 2019 class! We applaud your commitment to our community and the future of WIC!

2019 Leadership

Angela Abbott ...................... PHFE WIC
Barinderjeet Bambhra .......... Delta Health Care
Lizeth Betancourt .................. Yolo County Health & Human Services WIC
Wendy Ceja-Garcia ............. PHFE WIC
April Eagan ..................... Inyo County HHS
Maria Flores ..................... LA Biomed/SLAHP
Sandy Friedman ................ Community Medical Centers Inc WIC
Jasmin Garcia ..................... Community Action Partnership of Kern
Sandra Henderson ............ PHFE WIC
Sandra Herrera ................. United Health Centers
Yu Horng Nguyen ............ City of Long Beach WIC Program
Ana Klanjac ...................... San Mateo County Health WIC Program
Ruben Lopez .................. PHFE WIC
Nelly Mallo ...................... PHFE WIC
Amber McPherson ............ Butte County Public Health WIC
Camille Medina ................. Delta Health Care WIC
Alda Menhennet .............. Tiburcio Vasquez
Rhea Napeek .................. Yolo County Health & Human Services WIC
Blanca Perez ................ Merced County Community Action Agency
Veronica Plaugher-Macias .... Stanislaus County Health Services Agency
Basthy Ramirez ............ PHFE WIC
Grethel Richmond Pallaviccini... San Mateo County Health WIC Program
Sarah Smith ..................... Tulare County WIC
Karen Steppat ................. Shasta County WIC
Jennifer Torres .............. PHFE WIC
Andrea Vega-Harris .......... LA Biomed/SLAHP
Lisa Westfall ................ Mendocino County WIC
Vivan Wong .................... County of Santa Clara

2018-19 California Nutrition Corps Scholarship Winners

American Red Cross WIC
Robert Davis
Keni Lopez Sevilla
Nayeli Ramirez
Anne Peterson Memorial Scholarship
Butte County WIC
Gabriella Perlman
Fresno EOC WIC
Cynthia Tovar
Stefan Harvey Scholarship
Humboldt County
Shanley Schoenhofer
La Clinica de La Raza
Emily Martinez
Merced County Community Action
Carla Munoz Rocha
Anne Garrett Memorial Scholarship
Northeast Valley Health
Tania Menachegani Khachatourians
Caroline Pak
Katherine Rawson
Janica Smith
Planned Parenthood of Orange
Edna Victorio Pena
Public Health Foundation
Enterprises WIC
Allison File
Ana Ortega
Eileen Vargas
United Healthcare Centers
Jacqueline Espinosa
MEET CLEMENTINE!

Meet Clementine! This beautifully restored trolley serves the Orange County residents with style. Community Action Partnership of Orange County unveiled this newest innovation, more boutique market than mobile food bank, a few months ago. Clementine's looks are charming – with bright colors and chalkboard art, Clementine is designed to excite and appeal to families with children.

Clementine carries about 3,500 pounds of food to each distribution, enough to service about 60 families with 25 pounds of food each. CAPOC is also actively working to attract other partners to build a CalFresh outreach and nutritional education component into the distribution activity. The trolley is equipped to store fresh and frozen produce, meat and dairy products, diapers, and books. The goal is to have 17 distribution sites, and PHFE WIC's Santa Ana site was fortunate enough to be chosen as a distribution site.

On its maiden voyage to PHFE's Santa Ana WIC site, Clementine helped 55 happy and appreciative WIC families. One customer shared that her husband works three jobs and that they were struggling, being over-income for SNAP, but with only $600 to cover their needs for the month. She was beyond thankful and appreciative for Clementine!

PHFE Staff welcome Clementine!

JENNIFER JEFFRIES
A WIC STANDOUT

Jennifer Jeffries' name and face are synonymous with PHFE WIC! She started as a Site Supervisor in 1980 after completing her Master of Arts degree in Nutrition from Cal State Los Angeles. Jennifer operated WIC sites all over the South Bay, in cities like San Pedro, Wilmington, Torrance, Gardena and Hawthorne. She was quickly promoted to Area Manager and provided guidance to WIC Supervisors. She then combined her love for education with her creative energy to lead PHFE WIC's nutrition education efforts. From conceptualizing the topic, to developing the tools and slides (yes those were the days of the slide projectors and carousels!), she then trained the staff to present the sessions. She hired Thom Cheney (yes, the Thom that we know well as the official CWA graphic artist and photographer) and he was her partner in crime, making her ideas come to life in images and on slides. Many of us still remember her riff on actress Carmen Miranda in the wonderful class on eating more fruits and vegetables!

In 1989, Jennifer was promoted to Deputy Director and worked closely with Eloise Jenks, the Executive Director, in ensuring that PHFE WIC was strategically poised to accept more funds and grow, grow, grow! In 1992, when the program became so big that different departments needed to be created, Jennifer naturally moved to lead the Client Services Department, being responsible for the management of the 60-plus PHFE WIC sites and over 700 staff. She has promoted and trained dozens of Area Managers and Senior Managers during her 27 years in Client Services. Her leadership and vision has helped to support the management of hundreds of staff and thousands of clients during her tenure. Additionally, she has also overseen the Outreach Department, finding new strategies to reach the hard-to-serve families that would benefit greatly by receiving WIC services.

In addition to her dedication to WIC, Jennifer has been an active member of the Assistance League of Long Beach, mentoring at-risk high school students for over twenty years. Jennifer enjoys travel, is an avid gardener, historic Craftsman house aficionado and would be the best trivia team member ever.

We will all miss her and wish her the very best in her new adventures!
Since the program’s beginnings in 1974, the local agencies have survived numerous environmental events, such as earthquakes and mudslides. The threat of fires in California has taken threat to a whole new level, with WIC participants and staff impacted by community and personal losses of loved ones and property. For those WIC agencies in county health departments, the staff also serve in emergency capacities while keeping their program running and dealing with personal loss. State staff have to ensure local agencies are able to function and also work with the local grocers to provide food even during fire loss.

The Camp Fire of last fall was particularly devastating. Amber McPherson of Butte County tells us, "On the day of the fire we had several participants and community members trickle into our clinic as our Chico office is located at the bottom of the only escape route from Paradise. We provided them with snacks and water. One of our participants lost all of her donated breastmilk, and came in requesting help obtaining a pump and getting resources for donated breastmilk, we called all the hospitals in the area trying to help her and of course provided her counseling and support. Everyone was completely in shock at this point. All of our computer systems were down but we remained open to help support the community in any way we could.” Butte County WIC had several staff working in shelters, assisting at the Right of Entry office and bringing meals to the other staff working in these capacities. WIC staff held endless counseling sessions with participants from Paradise who mostly needed someone to talk to, and took on the daunting task of calling over 600 Paradise participants to try and locate them and help them with finding services in their new areas.

I’ve heard the stories from a lot of participants, as well as our WIC family who lost their homes and belongings in the Camp Fire, and I feel that we’ve all played the important role of listener every day in the important process of grief. I hope that each day we help those affected to move forward and start new beginnings, especially in a time with so much loss. I’ve been really proud of the county, and of our team for stepping up and helping where they can.

—Amber McPherson
Santa Barbara County WIC’s Outstanding Collaborations

One of Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (PHD) Nutrition Services / WIC’s strengths is partnering with other programs within the PHD and community. We are all here to help our participants and clients succeed. It takes all of us working together, with new ideas emerging when we work together. A few of our recent collaborations include:

PHD Oral Health Program Improves Oral Health and Nutrition to WIC Families

During the month of February 2019, the PHD Oral Health Program, funded by prop 56, collaborated on the development of dental classes and helped coordinate dental-themed goodies to WIC participants during the GA classes. The Oral Health Program received great feedback from participants about how our partnership has benefited them and they learned new things related to dental health.

Supervisor Hartmann presented a Resolution proclaiming February 2019 as National Children’s Dental Health Month in Santa Barbara County.

PHD NEOP Educators Visit WIC Sites

In a great collaboration between the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program (NEOP) and WIC, Educators from the NEOP Program visited WIC sites more than 12 times in August 2018 and conducted food tastings with clients, along with education and promotion of healthy snacks. At all sites WIC participants welcomed the NEOP staff activities and appreciated the recipes. The snacks were very popular with the children, and moms and dads were pleased as the education and tastings helped kids understand the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. A constant theme was the promotion of healthy drinks such as water, milk, and juice in limited amounts. One objective of the WIC/NEOP collaboration was to encourage parents and children to drink water by making it more appealing. This was demonstrated by adding colorful fruit and herbs like mint and rosemary to regular water. Clients received several recipes for “spa water,” and all agreed that the water tasted better, and that their children would definitely drink water this way! This collaboration truly illustrates the power of working together to provide excellent services to our customers.

PHD EWC brings Vital Health Information to WIC Families

The Every Woman Counts Program (EWC) is a state funded Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program dedicated to decreasing Breast and Cervical Cancer mortality in California. EWC provides free annual Pap Smears, annual Clinical Breast Exams, Mammograms, and other diagnostic tests as needed for qualifying individuals. Those who qualify for screening breast exams and mammograms include individuals 40 or older who are uninsured or underinsured, and have an income no greater than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Those qualifying for covered Pap smears are typically individuals 21 or older who are uninsured or underinsured and meet the same income guidelines for Breast Exams. Diagnostic Breast services are available for qualifying individuals of all ages who are symptomatic.

During the months of October-December 2018, collaboration between WIC and the Tri-County Region of EWC led to roughly 150 screening-aged individuals receiving Tailored Health Education Sessions about Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings. The collaborative effort began during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time of year when Public Awareness surrounding Breast Cancer is heightened in order to initiate a call to action. Classes were presented at WIC sites by EWC Health Education staff in several languages including Mixtec, English, and Spanish.
Contra Costa’s New Site

The Contra Costa County WIC Program relocated its Richmond office to a new facility in San Pablo in November, 2018. Thanks to the County’s efforts during the relocation process and to the City of San Pablo for recognizing the importance of WIC services, we can provide WIC services in a facility that is specially designed to serve women, infants, and children.

The relocation has provided the WIC Program a wonderful opportunity to serve more eligible people in the community and to collaborate closely with health programs, such as West County Healthy Start. The new facility is ideal for WIC families as it is situated right near the Health Center, in a safe environment, and easily accessible by public transportation.

The new building is a pleasant place to visit – designed to take in as much natural light as possible, with colorful and inviting entrance and waiting areas, a beautiful vestibule, a state-of-the-art reception area, and a baby-friendly waiting room. The facility’s classroom is spacious and can accommodate more than 40 occupants. The waiting room has a high ceiling and large windows that offer a pleasant view of the surroundings, including a nearby creek. The break room is a spacious and relaxing space where staff can enjoy their meals and take breaks. This room has a granite bar counter, round tables, and comfortable chairs. Staff may access an adjacent courtyard to get a breath of fresh air.

Construction has already begun on a City Hall and a County Behavioral Health facility near the WIC office. Once these structures are completed and the creek is beautified, more people will benefit and enjoy services that are provided in and around the vicinity. The San Pablo WIC facility has been much anticipated for years. WIC staff members are dedicated in offering high-quality services at San Pablo and throughout the County of Contra Costa.

Debbie Myers
A Mother’s Advocate

Strongly impacted by extended visits to Central America, graduate school professors in exile from Chile, and the Nestles boycott, Debbie has dedicated her professional career to helping low-income mothers make wise and healthful decisions for themselves and their families, free from corporate and commercial influence.

Prior to joining South LA Health Projects WIC (SLAHP), Debbie held positions out of state. At the Population Council, she was a team member on a project to increase breastfeeding rates in a New York City public hospital, focusing on hospital practices and nursing education. Low-literacy patient education materials developed in the project won a Mercury Award and were used nationally and internationally.

Subsequently she joined a research team at Development Associates, Inc., where she conducted research for the Food and Nutrition Service of USDA, identifying and profiling successful breastfeeding approaches and programs with potential application to the national WIC Program. Their findings were published in “Promoting Breastfeeding in WIC: A compendium of Practical Approaches.”

Debbie joined SLAHP WIC in 1989 to head up the nutrition and breastfeeding efforts. This includes initiating in 1991, of one of the first breastfeeding peer counselor programs. She served on the Breastfeeding Promotion Committee of the National WIC Association, and a founding member and past president of BreastfeedLA.

Debbie has coauthored several publications concerning breastfeeding, which have appeared in Pediatrics, The Journal of Human Lactation, and Advances in International Maternal and Child Health.

After a rich career dedicated to the well-being of young low-income families, we wish Debbie well in her retirement, later this year.
It’s coming!

The California WIC Card

Shopping with the WIC Card will be easier than using paper checks.

Flexible shopping: Participants can get WIC foods as they need them.

Easier checkout: Shopping with the WIC Card is like using a debit card.

Convenient benefits: All of a family’s WIC food benefits are on one card.

Easier benefit issuance: No more voucher printers!
Tammy’s Success Story

Tammy Mikan, came to County of Sonoma WIC in November 2006 as the clerical Senior Office Assistant and was about 10-15lbs overweight. Transitioning from a job where I stood and moved to a desk job didn’t help matters, and by 2016 I’d gained over 40lbs! Not liking gyms or exercise (obviously) and being extremely self-conscious about the weight, I would barely go on a walks with my husband and dog! But I was tired of feeling this way and in 2016, I forced myself to join an unknown and new fitness center that was opening in Santa Rosa. I became a member even before they opened their doors. My attendance was 2 days a week, and I found the High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts really hard, but I used their suggested modifications until I could do the exercises as demonstrated and increased my workouts to 4 days a week when they joined their annual weight loss challenge. After all the hard effort, I lost over 30lbs that first year.

Through the trauma of the Santa Rosa CA fires in 2017 and the holiday’s right after, I did gain back 10lbs, but continue to go 4 days a week and still love the workouts. Due to the success of the weight loss and my commitment to working out, I have gained a lot more confidence in my physical abilities. In the last 2 years, I have run several 5K’s (including a Mud Run), climbed to one of the highest peaks in Sonoma County (twice), zip lined through the forest and in October 2018, I went to Italy and France with my husband and daughter, who are both in great shape. I had no problem with the endless walking and climbing the stairs of ancient ruins or to the top of many cathedrals, one over 450 concrete steps! I still have 20lbs to lose, and am turning 60 years old this year, but I am determined to “put old on hold!”

I am happy that our WIC Agency has taken on the challenge to become wellness certified! A lot of my own weight challenges were due to working in an office/sitting environment. The break room treats and unhealthy potlucks were constant temptations for me! Though we still enjoy some treats, we are finally putting the emphasis on our work health through food and movement. My hope is that my co-workers experience the same health benefits that I have and we can continue to help each along this journey!

Sharing a favorite motivational quote: "It’s not about perfect. It’s about effort and when you bring that effort every single day, that where transformation happens. That’s how change occurs."
Tell Your Story
& Inspire Your Colleagues!

Send us your agency’s article ideas, photos, and best practices any time, and by September 20, 2019 for the Fall Education Day Edition.

Need more copies? New address? Get in touch!

To update your e-mail or mailing address, request more copies, or submit article ideas or drafts, contact Sarah Diaz at:

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916.572.0700 phone • 916.572.0760 fax

Read this and past issues of the WIC Watch online at http://calwic.org/news-a-publications/wic-watch.
Share the link with colleagues, family & friends!

CWA encourages local agencies to work with community partners during #WBW2019 next August 1-7 to educate your community about providing the support young families need to breastfeed successfully. WBW resources are available at http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/.

As you are planning, get inspiration and ideas from other Local Agency Breastfeeding Events at http://www.calwic.org/what-we-do/breastfeeding-advocacy/breastfeeding-advocacy-resources/.