

April 28, 2025, Advisory Group Meeting

Notes:

In attendance: Jenny Barta, Kirsten Lejonvarn, Terrie Jorgenson, Kristy Rott, Marianne Nelson, Teresa Severson, Amy Wittnebel, Jill Wilson, Katie Galloway, Wendy O’Leary, Marlee Morrison, Somadee Cheam, Michelle Weberg, Maria Bernhardt, Polly Ahrens, Kris Klopp, Marlee Morrison, Tina Breitenbach, Tami Matti, Rebecca Gruenes, Tammie Edmundson, Jessie Zins.

Absent: Kate Franken,

NWA Voting Representatives –need representatives

- Minnesota WIC advisory chair (Jenny Barta), Tribal (vacant), local agency rep 3 (Jill Wilson, metro), local agency rep 4 (Wendy O’Leary) will serve as NWA voting representatives. Advisory group local agency members are responsible to decide and coordinate recruitment. All positions are contingent on advisory chair to ensure good representation across the state. Jenny Barta will reach out to the Tribal coordinators in her region to see if there is a volunteer willing to fill the Tribal rep position. If not, Minnesota will have three local agency NWA voting representatives rather than four. Orientation (May 8) and business meeting (May 15) invites will be shared as needed. A document explaining NWA voting member representative background and roles were sent to Jenny to share as she recruits for a tribal representative and it has also been shared with advisory group.

Update on data privacy agreements

- The tentative timeline to rollout data sharing agreements has been changed from April to July. Delays are due to additional discussions with MDH legal and staffing changes on their team. The food and nutrition services Midwest regional office will need to review policy additions and revisions and we need their approval before we can move forward. Some focus areas on this project include the Minnesota operations manual (MOM) , developing local agency data sharing agreement guidance and templates, and MDH WIC state office data sharing agreements. Policies and exhibits are being revised and created in MOM and there will be a new exhibit to explain data sharing agreements to participants. Exhibits for data sharing agreement requirements and templates for Family Home Visiting (FHV), Head Start (HS) and Child & Teen Check Up (C & TC) programs will provide direction to local agencies that want to implement these data sharing agreements. FHV, HS, and C & TC will each need an individual data sharing agreement at the local agency level. Exhibit 1-K, the rights and responsibilities is being revised to include information on data sharing agreements. More information will be shared with local agency staff in the coming months. In July there will be a mini training on the local agency call, updates provided to advisory group, information at regional meetings in August, and in weekly updates. Administrators will be informed of this change through an email notification likely in July and Kate will attend the August meeting for local public health administrators. In July, participants will be notified through an App

notification if they are a registered Minnesota WIC app user. Any participant not registered for the app will be mailed a letter notifying them of the data sharing. Local agencies will also notify participants during certifications and recertifications with the updated rights and responsibilities. There will be communication to local agencies when the app notification and mailed letters go out to participants.

- Some questions came forward. **Once the local agency agreement is in place, is there a renewal requirement?** This will be verified with legal, but we believe it is indefinite or until either party wants out. **Concern over missed notifications in the app.** Old app didn't show you had a notification, that changed with the new app. Notifications go away but the messages stay in the app. Even if you have notifications off in phone, in the app it shows up under messages. **Will these data agreements be two-way? (Sharing both ways.)** With Head Start, yes. For Family Home Visiting, right now no. At the local level FHV participants typically sign a release to allow sharing with WIC. For Child and Teen Check-up (C&TC), not currently. **Will you have to have multiple forms to sign or just one.** If a data sharing agreement is complete at your local agency level for Head Start, C&TC, and/or FHV there will be nothing for the participant to sign. There is not an option for participants to opt out. Local Agencies will continue to have a release of information for sharing with other programs including a medical provider. **How does a new family hear about this?** Through the rights and responsibility form.
- For state data sharing agreements there is nothing for the participant to sign and there is no opportunity for them to opt out. We are developing agreements with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), MN Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC), MN Immunization Connection (MIIC), longitudinal follow-up for newborn screening conditions.

New food package – updates and discussion

- MDH WIC is making information system changes on Fri., June 7 for local agencies to implement with participants on Sat., June 9.
- June food package changes do not affect current participants' food benefits unless they want to change their food package beginning June 9. **However, all these changes need to be made before October 31.**
- Future food package changes will happen later this year (fall) and spring 2026.
- Refer to [Food Package Changes Implemented on June 9 \(PDF\)](#) for details on changes.

Food package discussions items

Juice or extra CVB discussion for default choices

Infants – default for WINNIE

6-8m default choices

- 128oz - 32 jars= all jars
- Half jars (64oz = 16 jars) and \$10 – **TOP choice**
- \$20 dollars and no jars

9-11m default choices

- \$20 dollars and no jars – **TOP choice**
- Half jars (64oz = 16 jars) and \$10

Women/child juice or extra CVB default choices

- Extra \$3 & no juice as the default
- One 64oz juice and no extra CVB – **TOP CHOICE.**

Note – can change defaults in future, but would require creating new food package

Tuna/salmon pouch options

- Fall 2025 - Minnesota adding to food package (tentative)
- Ingredients allowed: spices/herbs, sodium, oil, vegetable broth, and sugar
- Most common sizes – 2.5 and 2.6 oz., also available in 3 oz, 5 oz, 6 oz, and 11 oz.
- Any concerns with adding all these sizes? No concerns noted, group felt it is nice to have the options, nice to have flavors, pouches easier to carry, no sharp edges, and larger better for recipes.
- Will need to promote and encourage through education and support for safe consumption as now only 40% redemption rate.

Questions

Will fully breastfeed infants continue to get meat.

- Yes, but less. Will receive 40 oz. vs 77.5 oz.

How much tuna/salmon will be in food packages?

- Children 6 oz, FP VI – 10 oz, FPV – 15 oz, and FPVII – 20 oz.

Will documentation still be required for milk substitute-soy requirement for children after MN WIC milk food package changes in June 2025

- No documentation requirements after food package changes. Updates will be made to MOM Section 7.10 and Exhibit 7e.

How will participants know how much milk they will get?

- In WINNIE it will not look any different. CPAs will need to educate participants on how to shop and choose various milk options.
- If need help with evaporated there will be a table in shopping guide. Key is one can evaporated is .18 of a gallon.

More to come for changes in the Fall 2025

Will start to explore this next.

- Nut/seed butters
- Whole grains – expanding options and sizes
- Plant based dairy alternatives for milk category

Note – any added items will need to be widely available across state, will need to assess for sizes, options, cost.

NWA conference (April 22-25) highlights shared from Jenny Barta – advisory group chair.

Tuesday – local agency staff meeting. Able to meet staff from region and across the country. Interesting to hear other states on food package changes – Michigan has already broad banded formula and its going great. They noted less returned formula for food shelves.

Opening – great presentation on disrupting burnout. Discussed three B’s (baggage, boundaries, and brilliant.)

- Baggage – put it down at end of day, careful not to carry someone else’s, keep track of own, can’t get rid of
- Boundary – building this up for team, plan for when work is too stressful to help, use I’m in the weeds – starting to sink, need help, I’m getting blown in weeds mean stressed and overwhelmed.
- Brilliance – our individual skills, talents, identity, life experience, passion, this helps us engaged and stay energized.

Several good breakout sessions

- Peer breastfeeding work – one state used incentives to increase rates, provided breastfeeding outreach and support to be able to increase rates. Great USDA breastfeeding video – Trust your superpower. This is the link that the presenters provided for the video [Real Moms: Milk Supply](#) The presentation was called “Turning Ideas into Action for Pregnant Participants on their Breastfeeding Journey” from Fresno EOC WIC program in Fresno, CA.
- USDA provided update on food package changes. Minnesota team on forefront for work done for Hy-Vee online shopping pilot. Kudos and recognition given for being first pilot. Discussed Washington State and Massachusetts for rollout pilot for Walmart online shopping.
- WIC on Wheels – in Pennsylvania, a van is being utilized as a full mobile clinic; used for certifications, midcerts, and nutrition education visits in Since they use an offline card, the van helps with access issues.
- Another favorite session was the role of nutrition on lead levels. Can’t prevent but can impact affects by increasing diet high in iron with vitamin C and high in calcium since they compete with lead.

- Session on using peer navigators to help shop and use WIC allowed foods in recipes. Used peer breastfeeding model with immigrants and refugees.
- Kate Franken outgoing NWA president was recognized for her time and work in WIC and as an advocate for Indigenous families and was given a blanket from the National Indigenous and Native American WIC Coalition (NINAWC); the blanket was designed by Fond du Lac artist Sarah Agaton Howes.

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

Food Package Changes Implemented on June 9 (PDF)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/fp/changesjune25.pdf>)

Real Moms: Milk Supply

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cUE5XBgwsY&list=PLBccton6gOdozgS3ikqkl6GgemZrMXr84&index=3>)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us; to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.

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