

**WIC PROGRAM  
STATEWIDE VENDOR CALL**

**March 23, 2020**

**MINUTES**

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- I. Introductions Chris Furner
    - A. State WIC staff present on the call today are: Chris Furner, Rick Wardle, Mark Nielsen Angela Sorrells and Penny Tisdale.
  
  - II. Doing business after the Coronavirus: Chris Furner
    - A. Check the Utah (WIC) Web site regularly ([health.utah.gov/wic](http://health.utah.gov/wic)). The important things you'll find there are:
      - 1. The current version of e-WIC policies with accompanying forms.
      - 2. Both forms, the Non-Disclosure Agreement and the Direct Deposit forms.
      - 3. Alerts
      - 4. Newsletters
      - 5. Minutes from the Meetings
      - 6. Pilot Schedule
      - 7. Training Schedules
  
  - III. Our goals prior to the Coronavirus and the Changes well have to make. Penny Tisdale
    - a) To have all our pilot stores training done by May 15. (We are now looking at doing distance training).
    - b) To have all training done by August 21.
    - c) We had 3 trainings scheduled for Smiths. We have now cancelled those. We also had to cancel the two full days to hit all of the independent stores.
    - d) Currently, the pilot is still scheduled for June 1st for Davis, Morgan, Summit and Weber Counties.
    - e) The statewide roll out is scheduled for the end of September (the whole state should be up by October 1st).
    - f) For Associated Foods member stores we still are holding the mid-April date for that to happen in soft ways.
    - g) Some large stores have expressed the desire to attend one of our train the trainer meetings and then pass that along to their employees.
- \* Rick provided some clarification and a question for Penny - when you talk about the training for Associated Food member stores, do you mean the stores that are owned by Associated and the stores were just supplied by Associated being – considered being independent?

Penny replied that yes. If Associated Foods owns the store those are member stores and everyone else is an independent.

#### IV. Operational Updates:

Chris Furner

- A. We will begin doing remote certifications for the participants.
- B. We will be sending out a message concerning some allowable food substitutions for clients during this time of product shortage.
  - (a) The participants of this call requested that WIC address substitutions for the following:
    - Meadow Gold Milk will no longer be sending out any 1% or non-fat milk. We will be asking them to approve any fat content milk at this time.
    - Alternatives to whole fat yogurt for 1 year olds, like non-fat.
- C. We are working to change the number of items per voucher. That way if someone cannot pick up 3 gallons of milk at one time, at least they can pick up one.
- D. Regarding Soy Milk - If the participant cannot find the WIC approved brands of soy milk, can they get another brand?
  - (a) They can choose another brand similar to; just as long as it is comparable nutritionally.

#### V. Questions or Comments from the Vendors:

All

COMMENT: Candice from ARO - one helpful idea is that some stores are keeping their formula behind their service desk. That has been helpful.

WIC REACTION: For those stores who are keeping some items behind the counter such as formula, make sure it's posted on the shelf where you normally have the formula so that if they should ask at the service desk they'll know that we are not completely out of that product.

COMMENT: Betsy Erickson talked to a participant in a Walmart store and they told her that they would not be having 1% milk anymore. So Betsy called Meadow Gold and they said that for the foreseeable future they will not be sending out any more 1% or nonfat milk. WINCO is dealing with the same thing right now.

WIC REACTION: As the state office is working with the FNS to come up with food substitutions, we will also be asking them to honor any fat content in milk at this time. We'll keep you in the loop.

QUESTION: Thalia from Lee's Marketplace. What do we do right now if we don't have the full amount of gallons of milk for the voucher?

ANSWER: At this time the only thing you can do is apologize and ask the participant to contact their clinic and have the checks replaced with more than one voucher. Since we are not seeing many of our clients in person right now, the clinic would be required to mail them out. It will be frustrating for everyone until we can start issuing checks with fewer items on them.

#### VI. Questions for the Vendors from WIC:

All

1. What issues are you running into with the availability of foods?
  - Lee's Marketplace responded - Candice said that they just had a hard time keeping up with the increased demand for food. But, at this point we are starting to catch up.

2. Is there anything that the WIC Program can do to help you?

- There was a question about where the vendors can find any new memos regarding the food substitutions. The answer is that if you go to the website ([health.utah.gov/wic](http://health.utah.gov/wic)) go into vendors, on the lower right side is a list of topics, it will be added to that list.

VII. PRODUCTS THAT SHOULD NOT BE SUBSTITUTED:

Mark Nielsen

A. The definitions of what we consider store brand/private label:

(a) Store Brands/Private Labels - (examples - Food Club, Kroger, Great Value, Market Pantry, WinCo, Signature Kitchens, Signature Farms, Lucerne, Freedom’s Choice and Harmons.

- If the store does not carry a store brand/private label for the WIC food item, then the cheapest brand can be purchased.
- Stores are required to carry store brand/private label products for the following:

- Milk
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Beans
- Canned Tuna
- Brown Rice
- Juice

\* When certain brands are specified in the Authorized WIC Foods booklet, only those brands listed may be purchased.

B. WIC Approved Foods that have a store brand/private label

- Milk
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Yogurt
- Juice
- Beans and Lentils
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Fish

\* If a store does not carry a store brand or private label for the WIC food item the cheapest brand can be purchased.

Regarding the milk, cheese, eggs, beans and brown rice. If you are out of stock you could substitute the least expensive brand.

(a) You’ll notice the food booklet will say purchase store brand or private label for some items. And then other items, it will list the specific brands that you should buy. The food booklet lists specific brands and they should be choosing one of those brands.

- (b) Because for those types of food products (specific brands), the state team has had to do a nutrition review of the food items to make sure they meet the USDA nutritional requirements for WIC and so those brands have made the cut for being nutritionally eligible and also met the price criteria for our state.
- (c) So that's why some items have specific brands where as others just say store brand private label. So just to refresh, on a store brand private label you can substitute a name brand if you're out of your store brand or private label.

VIII. We hope this call has been helpful. We will post the information on our Web site.

IX. Adjourn - the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00 am MST

END