

WIC Vendor Advisory Council (WVAC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Location: Connecticut Department of Transportation Conference Room A

Start Time: 2:00 pm

End Time: 4:00 pm

Recorder: Kevin Krusz

IN ATTENDANCE: Brian Andrikis, Kimberly Boulette, George Casab, Donna Brewer, John Frassinelli, Mitch Klein, Kathy Minicucci, Kevin Krusz, Adam Osmond, Janet Rankin, Stan Sorkin, Sue O'Neil, Pat Sullivan, Crecencio Custodio, Wilberto Diaz

Adam Osmond, owner of Sam's Food Store in New Britain, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone for attending. The day's agenda was distributed.

Introduction of New Member (s)

George Casab, Nestle USA Inc.

- 1) Kim asked George if the label on Gerber would change since Nestle purchased Gerber. George replied that nothing has been planned to change.

Topics for discussion:

❖ *Vendor Suggestions-*
Adam Osmond

- 1) Adam suggested when the State WIC Program sends the Price Stock Surveys a form should be placed either on the bottom of the survey or attached to the survey for vendors to relate ideas or suggestions. When the Prices Stock Surveys are returned to the State, the ideas/suggestions will accompany the surveys.

❖ *State WIC Program Update -*
USDA New Food Package, Kim Boulette

- 1) Kim gave the Committee an update on the new WIC Food Package with an anticipated implementation timeline.
- 2) Kim mentioned the milk alternatives that might be available to WIC participants with a doctor's note.
- 3) At this time, there are no soy beverages that meet the federal standards.
- 4) Tofu - is an option for milk.
- 5) Bread - The only one-pound available statewide bread is sold through George Weston bakeries and only certain varieties.
- 6) Fruits and vegetables
 - a. benefits are \$6, \$8, & \$10 vouchers (children, pregnant/postpartum/partially breastfeeding women, and fully breastfeeding women, respectively)
 - b. fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables
 - c. all fruits and vegetables are allowed except for white potatoes or items containing white potato
- 7) Only fresh bananas can be used as a substitute for infants 6 months or older
- 8) Canned juice will no longer be authorized. Plastic bottles will be used because the size, 64 ounces, can be easily divisible into the total allotted amounts. Janet said that participants prefer plastic bottles over the aluminum cans.
- 9) Milk: Information specified on WIC checks
 - a. Whole milk given to participants ages 1-2 years old
 - b. Lower fat milks given to participants over two years old

- 10) Cheese:
 - a keeping same types of cheese
 - b if issuing cheese, must also issue 1 quart of milk with the cheese
- 11) Eggs:
 - a. Reduce amount to one dozen
- 12) Infant Formula:
 - b. Must reduce the amount of infant formula given to accommodate for the new food items

❖ *State WIC Program Update –
Cost Containment*

- 1) John wants the information relayed to all vendors that when Price Stock Surveys are received in the stores, this document is to be sent to the State Office as soon as possible! This information affects the maximum amounts to be charged for WIC foods.
- 2) John said that the federal government has increased its allotment of food money to Connecticut so at least 2/3 of the year will be financially covered.
- 3) The USDA said the states cannot modify (decrease) the amount of food given to participants to contain costs so we have to contain costs in other ways.

Open Discussion

- 1) Stan said that it would be extremely expensive to have manufacturers adjust the size of products to fit the demands of the WIC Program, especially if the size of the products were larger than the existing items.
- 2) Mitch added that Krasdale requested a change from one of their representatives and this manufacturer refused.
- 3) George also said Nestle would not readjust their sizes due to cost.
- 4) The problem with the new Check 21 imaging law was presented. WIC representatives responded by asking vendors to consult with the branches of their bank on this issue. The State WIC Program will process these checks without a State-processing fee.
- 5) Kim addressed the criteria for additional vendors. According to the federal government, Connecticut has more vendors than is actually needed (a higher vendor to participant ratio). In February 2008, 57 stores sent documents to the State WIC Program expressing their interest as a WIC vendor. Out of the 57 stores, only 12 were “needed.”
- 6) A question was raised as how many of these stores were gas stations. Kim replied that we don’t know how many were gas stations because we do not collect that information. Kevin said that some were large stores, but even Stop & Shop sells gasoline. Kim offered to email the group the most recent authorized WIC vendor list, so members could look at the kinds of stores who are authorized.
- 7) A request was made for the WIC Program to provide our current participation.