



# Building Stronger Clinical and Community Partnerships

Camden Partnership for Health Women and Children | Gateway WIC | Camden, NJ



## INTRODUCTION

Camden, New Jersey has a population of just over 76,000 in an area of 8.92 square miles (U.S. Census). As of 2016, there were 72 WIC authorized stores in Camden county with 37 stores located in the city of Camden that are mostly small corner stores with fewer options. As a result, one-third of the WIC participants surveyed said they travel beyond the city limits to redeem their WIC vouchers (2015, Gateway WIC Participant Survey).

During our needs assessment we realized that there were a number of programs and organizations in Camden that were serving similar and sometimes the same population as the WIC program. By focusing on establishing and enhancing the community clinical linkages in Camden, this project sought to provide continuum of care for WIC clients to address obesity and chronic diseases, long after their WIC consultation. By helping WIC participants and Camden community members connect with health care providers, community organization and other public health agencies, this project improved their access to preventive and chronic care services. This CPHMC project served as a conduit to strengthen the public health safety net for our WIC participants and other community members in Camden. As a premier public health program, particularly in areas such as Camden, WIC has been very instrumental in helping vulnerable families connect to resources, information and services to improve their quality of life.

## ACTIVITIES

- Researching ideas and talking with other agencies saved time and money. We adopted resources originally develop from Minnesota WIC and Texas WIC. With their permission, Gateway was able to modify and reproduce them to fit our community. Feedback from our OBGYN Team Leader was an important part of the process as well.
- Seeking permission required a little research, but after a few phone calls we connected to the appropriate department, within the Texas Department of State Health Services. The approval process was simple, however, keep in mind it may take some time to receive authorized permission.
- Developing resource material can be a costly expense. Find out if anyone in your agency has a hidden design talent. We used images that were free for commercial use and did not require attribution.
- We also developed a single page information sheet that we distributed with the window clings. This info sheet defined BFE, documented the New Jersey law supporting breastfeeding mom's, provided resource links and contact information.
- BFE supporters began by enlisting coalition members and partners. After speaking with clients, they suggested we engage faith based organizations as well.



Breastfeeding Friendly Establishment (BFE) window clings: English (left), Spanish (middle), and single page information sheet (right)

## OUTCOMES

- We started a conversation about WIC with multiple agencies and discussed various strategies for addressing the obesity and chronic disease epidemic. We successfully implemented some strategies, while with others we fell short.
- As the project continued, we were able to revisit strategies that fell short of success. For example, we attempted to establish a satellite WIC site in one of the area hospitals. When factors outside of our control made it logistically impossible, we had to consider other ways to get providers to refer to and advocate for WIC. This resulted in developing the WIC Rx Nutrition pads.

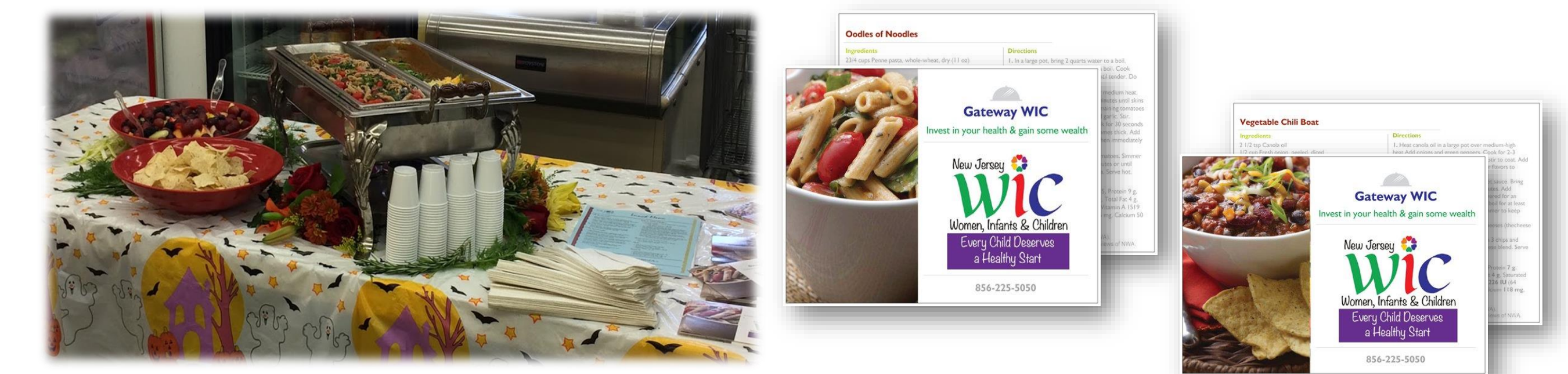


(front)

WIC Rx pads distributed to healthcare providers and child care programs.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Camden city has no shortage of healthcare providers, but specialists like pediatricians and OBGYN's work within hospital systems. In other words, there are no stand alone or private specialty physician's offices. Enlisting provider and staff support, within a healthcare system, is a multi-step process and significantly time consuming. We also faced similar obstacles when speaking with pharmacy and chain retailers like CVS and Price Rite.
- We achieved greater success and support from small businesses such as Miguel's Pharmacy, which are independently owned. Owner, Miguel Arriaga continues to be one of our most active coalition members and supporters. He is the first to endorse the BFE initiative by displaying the window clings in his store. See photo in "Project Overview" section.
- Think outside the box! Even if your planned strategy does not work out exactly as you had hoped, an alternate strategy can still be a success.
- Choose objectives and strategies wisely. The project time frame is shorter than you think and so allocate a realistic timeline for accomplishing your game plan.



Invest in Your Health, Healthy Food Demonstration: A community wide taste testing using recipes from USDA website. Our partners, Cousin's Supermarket and Price-Rite donated food resources and coalition member, Cathedral Kitchen, prepared the meals.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Utilize existing partnerships to help develop your coalition.
- Save time and money by doing a little research. Speak with other agencies and when possible repurpose resources already developed, but of course always get permission and give appropriate acknowledgements.
- Be considerate of your partners. Remember it should be a symbiotic partnership. Don't create additional work for partners.
- Developing a resource guide for the community, particularly WIC participants, doesn't have to be time consuming nor expensive.

## NEXT STEPS

- Gateway was awarded additional funding for the next 6 months to continue engaging coalition members
- We are actively pursuing implementation of our initiatives: Breastfeeding Support, WIC Referral, and WIC Rx pads to name a few.
- WIC conversations and partnerships are progressing beyond the project period e.g. through television, internet and radio campaigns, referral forms, WIC Rx and increased community outreach initiatives
- We will continue to push forward to facilitate PSE changes with the hospital systems, e.g. changes to Electronic Medical Record (EMR) at Cooper Hospital

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This poster focuses on two initiatives: **Breastfeeding Friendly Establishment (BFE)** and **WIC Rx Nutrition** pads. The BFE initiative was a way for businesses to support breastfeeding moms and a healthy community. Businesses can show their support by displaying the BFE window cling on their front door. The WIC Rx Nutrition pads were developed as a referral tool for healthcare providers, head start programs and others.



Miguel's Pharmacy, a Breastfeeding Friendly Establishment. Supporting a healthy community and the BFE initiative by displaying the window clings.

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