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Nutrition Risk Criteria and Priority System		

POLICY

1. As part of the nutrition assessment process, the Qualified Nutritionist/Competent Professional Authority must determine nutrition risk eligibility using the New York State WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria and Priority System, including the defined New York State WIC High Risk Criteria for identifying participants at high risk.
2. Each participant must have at least one nutrition risk criteria identified for each certification.
3. The Qualified Nutritionist/Competent Professional Authority must document applicable nutrition risk criteria in the participant's record, as well as the supporting nutrition and health information that corresponds with the qualifying nutrition risk criteria identified.
4. The Qualified Nutritionist/Competent Professional Authority must ensure that the highest possible priority level is assigned for each participant based on identified nutrition risk criteria.

REGULATIONS

Nutritional Risk, [7 CFR §246.7\(e\)](#)
WIC Policy Memo #2011-5: [WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria](#)


DEFINITIONS

Refer to Acronyms and Definitions in Section 1011.

PROCEDURE

LA/VMA Policy Required Yes No

1. The Qualified Nutritionist (QN) or Competent Professional Authority (CPA) must determine nutrition risk eligibility after performing a complete nutrition assessment, including a thorough review of all information available.
2. Based on the complete nutrition assessment, the QN/CPA must identify all applicable nutrition risk criteria and system-generate or manually assign the appropriate risk(s) in the participant's record. Refer to the NYS Nutrition Risk Criteria and Priority System policy supplement for a full list of allowable nutrition risk criteria, including detailed definitions, interpretations, and parameters.
3. The QN/CPA must document all nutrition risk criteria from an out-of-state Verification of Certification card in the participant's record.
4. For all nutrition risk criteria, including manually assigned risks, the supporting health and nutrition information must be apparent upon review of the participant's record.

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5. The QN/CPA must address identified nutrition risk criteria in a participant-centered manner and work with the participant to determine appropriate nutrition services, including nutrition and breastfeeding education/counseling, food package tailoring, and appropriate referrals, as warranted.
6. The QN/CPA must ensure that the highest possible priority level is established in the participant's record based on the participant's qualifying nutrition risk criteria. All nutrition risk criteria have an assigned priority level from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Priority levels are assigned based on the following:

Priority I: Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants at nutrition risk as demonstrated by hematological or anthropometric measurements or other documented nutritionally-related medical conditions which demonstrate the need for supplemental foods.

Priority II: Infants up to six months of age born to mothers who either participated in the WIC Program during pregnancy or whose medical record documents that they were at nutrition risk during pregnancy due to nutrition conditions detectable by biochemical or anthropometric measurements or other documented nutritionally-related medical conditions which demonstrate the need for supplemental foods. Priority II infants have no documentable risk conditions that would otherwise qualify them under Priority I.

Priority III: Children at nutrition risk as demonstrated by hematological or anthropometric measurements or other documented medical conditions which demonstrate the child's need for supplemental foods; high risk postpartum women at nutrition risk as demonstrated by hematological or anthropometric measurements or documented nutritionally-related conditions that are indicative of the woman's increased need for supplemental foods.

Priority IV: Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants at nutrition risk due to an inadequate dietary pattern.

Priority V: Children at nutrition risk due to an inadequate dietary pattern.


Priority VI: All at-risk postpartum women who do not otherwise qualify under Priority III.

GUIDANCE

Policy Supplement Available Yes No

Participants who have transferred into the local agency from another state will be system-assigned the Transfer of Certification risk. If the participant presents a VOC card, the QN/CPA must document any risks identified on the VOC card. This can be done by writing a note in the participant's record to indicate the pertinent risk information or by completing an assessment to system-assign any risks identified on an out-of-state VOC card.

Self-reporting of a diagnosis by a health care provider should not be confused with self-diagnosis, where a person simply claims to have or to have had a medical condition without any reference to professional diagnosis. For nutrition risk criteria that are self-reported by the participant, best practice is for the

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QN/CPA to validate the nutrition risk by asking probing questions. The QN/CPA may also verify a medical diagnosis with the participant's health care provider with the permission and written consent of the participant. The establishment of a relationship with health care providers will help WIC staff provide better nutrition/health education and reinforcement of care, as well as a better understanding of WIC's role in health promotion, screening, and counseling.

The New York State WIC Medical Referral Form should be used to document nutrition risk eligibility from a referral source whenever possible.

The USDA Nutrition Risk Write-Ups provide detailed information for all nutrition risks used by the NYS WIC Program, including the risk definition and cut-off values; participant category and priority level; the risk justification; implications for WIC nutrition services, and references.

RESOURCES

WIC Program Manual Sections and Supplements:

- #1120: Waiting Lists
- #1135: Nutrition Assessment Process
- #1160: Transfers and Verification of Certification
- #1216: High Risk Care

WIC Library:

- USDA Nutrition Risk Write-Ups
- USDA, Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Services Standards, August 2013

Other:

- USDA WIC Policy Memorandum 2011-5: WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria