

EHR-Based WIC Screening and Referral Program in Obstetrics to Improve Maternal and Child Health

TRAINING FOR PARTICIPATING AHWFB OB PRACTICES

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Who are we?

- Mayte Grundseth, M.ED RD
 - Nutrition Program Director, FC Department of Public Health
- Sheila Britt-Smith, M.ED RD IBCLC
 - Nutrition Supervisor, FC Department of Public Health
- Kristina Lewis, MD MPH SM
 - Associate Professor, Epidemiology & Prevention AHWFB
- Sally Eagleton, PhD
 - Staff Scientist, Epidemiology & Prevention AHWFB
- Angelina Pack
 - Project Manager, Epidemiology & Prevention AHWFB



Agenda

- Overview of WIC
- Introduce screening and referral tool
- What do patients think about WIC screening?
- Q&A

What is WIC?

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **W**omen, **I**nfants, and **C**hildren (**WIC**)
- Public Health Nutrition Program
- Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



WIC Fun Facts

85 WIC Agencies across North Carolina service over 257,553 women, infants and children every year!

Across America, there are 90 state WIC Agencies, 1,900 local WIC Agencies, and 10,000 clinics!

WIC supports 51% of ALL infants born in the USA! And 1 out of 5 children under 5

**Forsyth WIC:
10,032 participants
759 Pregnant
1,610 PPartum
2,404 Infants
5,259 Children**

WIC's Mission

“To assure healthy pregnancies, healthy birth outcomes, and healthy growth and development for women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk, by providing nutritious supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, education on healthy eating, and referrals to healthcare and critical social services.”

~National WIC Association

Who does WIC serve?



What does WIC provide?



Healthy Food



Breastfeeding Support



Nutrition Education



Community Referrals



Community Referrals

- Immunization Services
- Prenatal Care
- Well Child Health Care
- Social Services
- Substance Abuse Counseling and Treatment
- Food Assistance Resources
- Dental Care



Why Should you refer clients to WIC?



Here is why:

WIC participation in pregnancy improves maternal and child health

- Improves uptake of prenatal care (Blakeney EL et al., BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth, 2019).
- Decreases inadequate gestational weight gain and improves maternal diet quality (Hamad R et al, Am J Epi, 2019; Currie J et al, Econ Inq, 2015)
- May protect against preeclampsia and gestational diabetes (Hamad R et al, JAMA Peds 2019)
- Connects pregnant women to prenatal care, provides nutritious foods and encourages health-promoting behaviors. These factors are linked to positive birth outcomes such as reductions in infant mortality (USDA, 2012).

WIC improves children's health. Children who participate in WIC are more likely to receive regular preventive health services and are better immunized than other low-income children who do not participate in WIC (USDA, 2012). Less overweight and Obesity incidence.

WIC improves infant feeding practices and diet quality. Promotes and supports breastfeeding as the optimal infant feeding choice. Revisions to the WIC Food Package have resulted in increased intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy (USDA, 2012).

Our goal: better connect pregnant patients to the WIC program

- ~52% of eligible pregnant individuals become enrolled in WIC
- Barriers to WIC participation:
 - Uncertainty about eligibility criteria
 - Paperwork, time, and inconvenience of registering
- Screening program can reduce confusion, enrollment delays, and increase the effectiveness of WIC

Step 1: *screen* for WIC participation and document enrollment status

Do you currently participate in either the WIC or SNAP program?

WIC only SNAP only WIC and SNAP None currently Not sure

Travel Screen PHQ-2/PHQ-9 PHQ-9 GAD-7 PSC-17 C-SSRS Hearing/Vision Opioid Risk Asthma Control SDOH

SDOH Additional Questions PEG-3 **OB WIC Screening**

- This will show up in the screening navigator
- Medicaid or Self-Pay
- New OB / Initial OB visits

Step 2: *refer* eligible but not enrolled patients directly to WIC

- Will only appear if NOT already in WIC

Do you approve us sharing your information with WIC so they can contact you about enrolling?



Yes, approves referral for WIC contact

No, does not approve referral for WIC contact

Travel Screen

PHQ-2/PHQ-9

PHQ-9

GAD-7

PSC-17

C-SSRS

Hearing/Vision

Opioid Risk

Asthma Control

SDOH

SDOH Additional Questions

PEG-3

OB WIC Screening

Step 3: Automatic referral is sent to WIC County where patient resides

The screenshot displays a patient record interface with a navigation bar at the top containing tabs for 'Message', 'Visits/Patient Info', 'Meds/Problems', 'Vitals/Labs', 'My Last Note', and 'Help'. The 'Message' tab is selected. On the left side, there is a patient profile for 'Mom Zztest', a 35-year-old female born on 2/15/1989, with MRN 300108861, CSN 6920166131, and phone number 999-999-9999 (H). Below the profile, it shows 'PCP: None' and 'Primary Cvg: Self Pay'. The main message area shows a blue notification bubble with an envelope icon and the text 'WIC referral from OB screening - Forsyth'. Below this, the sender is identified as 'Traci Kirkner, RN' with a right-pointing arrow and the recipient as 'P Link Forsyth County Health Department'. The message area also includes standard email controls like back, refresh, and search.

Message Visits/Patient Info Meds/Problems Vitals/Labs My Last Note Help

MZ

Mom Zztest ↗

Female, 35 y.o., 2/15/1989
MRN: 300108861
CSN: 6920166131
Phone: 999-999-9999 (H)

PCP: None
Primary Cvg: Self Pay

← ↻ | ✓ Done ← ↵ → 🔍 ⋮

✉ **WIC referral from OB screening - Forsyth**

Traci Kirkner, RN → P Link Forsyth County Health Department

In a survey with 100 pregnant AHWFB pregnant patients

- 99% agreed that WIC is a great option to support nutrition for families
- 100% agreed that it is a good thing that WIC exists
- 4% agreed it is embarrassing to participate in WIC
- **94% would be very or somewhat comfortable with their OB office asking about WIC participation**
- 90% would be very or somewhat comfortable if their OB team sent a message or referral to the WIC program to help get enrolled
- 90% would be more likely to sign up for WIC if their OB office sent a referral on their behalf

Common misconceptions

- People cannot be on SNAP and WIC at the same time
 - You are allowed to receive benefits from both programs
- People with private health insurance cannot qualify for WIC
 - Anyone whose household income is \leq 185% of the federal poverty level may be eligible
- The WIC program reports citizenship data to the US government
 - This is false, and anyone can participate who is eligible, regardless of citizenship status

Contact information

- Atrium Health Contacts:

- Kristina Lewis: kristina.lewis@advocatehealth.org
- Sally Eagleton: sally.eagleton@advocatehealth.org

- Forsyth County WIC contacts:

- Mayte Grundseth: grundseth@forsyth.cc
- Sheila Britt-Smith: brittssj@forsyth.cc

QUESTIONS?
