

# WIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

## MEETING MINUTES

May 12, 2015

Members Present: Maria Carunungan, Debra Celnik, Whitney Dunlap, Kristen Hurley, Howard Klein, Tracey Leef, Jacqueline Marlette-Boras, Shannon Meadows, Rachael Parren, and Dana Silver.

Members Absent: Heather Ross, Joan Salim and Michael Wilson.

Others Present: Deborah Morgan, David Paige, Vanessa Pierre-Louis.

### **Welcome**

Jackie Marlette-Boras opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Tracey Leef called for a motion to approve the minutes from the March, 2015 meeting. Maria Carunungan moved and Whitney Dunlap seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved, as written, with two abstentions.

### **Program Updates/Information**

#### Participation

Jackie reviewed the participation spreadsheet for the July, 2014 – April, 2015 timeframe and noted that although we had a slight dip in February, Maryland's numbers continue on an upward trend. She also noted that a new graph had been developed that showed participation trends from 2013-2015, and pointed out that our numbers started increasing in June/July 2014 when we started introducing our new outreach campaigns and materials. A few of the newer outreach items were shared with Council members. A member asked if when we do see drops in participation if it tended to be in one county or a general statewide trend; Jackie responded that it's normally a general trend.

#### e-WIC Update

Maryland and the USVI held their kick-off meeting with Maximus, the e-WIC Quality Assurance contractor, in April. This is the initial, start-up phase of the contract where Maximus will be submitting a lot of project management documents for review, discussion, and approval.

Jackie announced that the State received three proposals for an e-WIC Processor. Oral presentations are scheduled to be held May 28 with a projected recommendation for award around June 8. FNS will then have 60 days to review and approve the recommendation. If all goes as planned, we hope to have a signed contract in the late July, early August timeframe.

A member asked if we had decided if we would be using chip and PIN technology for our cards since he was hearing that retailers may have no other choice but to accept chip and PIN cards as early as September, 2015. Jackie and Debbie responded that chip and PIN cards have been discussed among states, FNS and e-WIC processors but that no definitive timeline had been given for their implementation. Maryland will work closely with retailers and all other parties to ensure that all existing retailers are not adversely impacted by our e-WIC card selection.

### New Foods List

The new WIC Authorized Foods List (AFL), effective April, 2015, was reviewed. Jackie noted that the next revision was already being worked on and would coincide with e-WIC implementation. Retailers and manufacturers will be notified when products will be accepted for review but we anticipate it being in the July, 2015 timeframe.

Jackie pointed out some of the challenges with maintaining the AFL. For example, we recently received notification from FNS that the tool used to screen and authorize breads for the last few years is no longer valid. Additional information from the manufacturer will now be required in lieu of the product label. WIC food packages are currently under review by the Institute of Medicine (IoM) and states have requested that strong consideration be given to constant changes in the marketplace in container sizes and the availability of products in stores.

A member asked if consideration was being given to include organic products. Jackie said that states had also asked the IoM to recommend organic vs non-organic products. Some states allow organic in some food categories but that in many cases cost is the driving factor.

### Farmer's Market Promotions

The Program is currently working with the Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control to develop a joint advertisement for Farmers' Markets. In addition, the third edition of the WIC Farmers' Market Cookbook has been sent to press with many new advertising partners joining the publication this year. Jackie also noted that the Department of Agriculture has developed a mobile app to assist participants in finding a Farmers' Market near them.

### WIC Challenges – WSJ Article

Jackie pointed out that she had included an article from the Wall Street Journal in everyone's packet entitled "Makers of Baby Formula Press Their Case on WIC Program." In summary, the article's focus is on Mead Johnson Nutritionals and their efforts to change (tighten) WIC eligibility requirements, and thereby limiting the pool of those eligible to participate.

### **WIC Advisory Council Bylaw Changes**

#### Results from March Vote

The bylaw change that was proposed and voted on at the March meeting passed. That change removed Article III.F, the requirement to submit an Annual Report to the DHMH Secretary.

#### New Proposed Change

Jackie proposed that the Council give consideration to pre-schedule only one meeting per year in person, since Article V of the bylaws allows for a meeting to be called at any time by the Chairperson or at the request of any five members. The suggestion is that the first sentence in Article V of the bylaws be changed to read: The Council shall meet as often as necessary, as determined by the Chairperson, or at the request of any five members, but no less than one time each year. Jackie also suggested that the annual meeting be held in October so that new members can be oriented and we can give an overview of the Program's status as we begin a new Federal Fiscal Year. Discussion ensued as to whether the change would impact the Council's overall purpose, attendance requirements, etc. Jackie noted that other DHMH councils meet in person annually and are sent periodic updates throughout the year, and

then are called upon if needed. The state will draft the change to the bylaws and send out an electronic ballot.

### **Membership**

Two council members have terms expiring in August, 2015 but both are eligible to renew for another three year term. Debbie will send renewal packets to those expiring.

### **Questions/Discussion/Sharing**

A member asked if retailer/store expiration dates within a chain of stores could be synchronized to be on the same authorization cycle. Jackie responded that she would discuss the possibility with the Vendor Manager and that perhaps we could work with chain stores to authorize stores in groups of 10 to lessen the administrative burden.

Another member noted that the Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition is looking for businesses to pledge their commitment to breastfeeding and requested that we put an article in the Vendor newsletter. The state will follow-up with the Coalition to get an article included.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The location will be at the WIC Training and Temporary Services Center, 5503A Ritchie Highway, Brooklyn Park, MD 21225.