

Upcoming webinar planned for physicians on Maryland WIC's medical documentation requirements.

Growing season is here, visit a Local Farmers' Market!

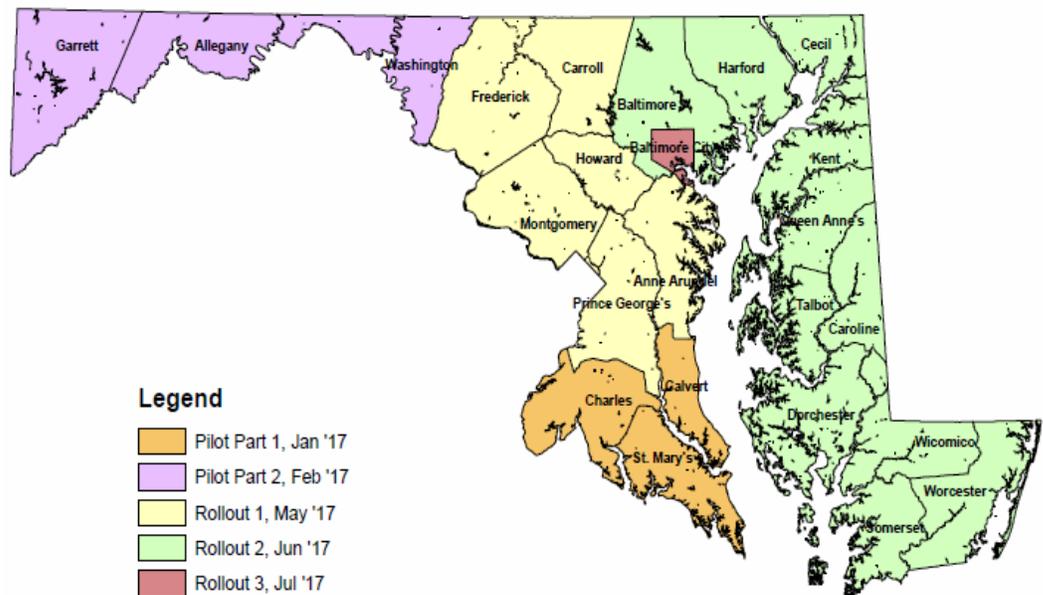
"Poverty is systemic and not just about individual choices." One of the lessons learned as all staff attended Bridges Out of Poverty training presented by aha! Process, Inc. on March 30.

eWIC

Since our last meeting, members of the WIC State staff, as well as several local agency coordinators, have met several times with our eWIC contractor, Solutran. In these meetings, we have discussed the structure as well as the processes of the eWIC solution we will implement in Maryland. Many of our decisions are based on the requirements of USDA, such as the actual formatting of the system and the rules that govern benefit issuance. However, there are many potential paths to follow for some options, so having staff from various parts of the Program weigh in is essential for the best outcome possible. In all cases, our overriding focus is on the participant and how a decision will affect their experience with WIC.

Our eWIC contractor, Solutran, is in the process of engaging our vendor community to ensure that they are ready to accept eWIC when we launch our first pilot in January 2017. The map below illustrates the pilot and rollout plan that we are working towards. There are a lot of details to work out between now and that first pilot but all parties are committed to staying on track to meet our projected dates.

Maryland eWIC Tentative Implementation Schedule



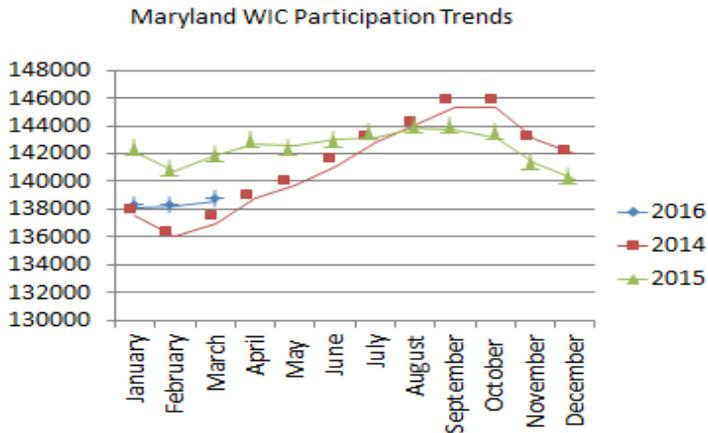
WIC Advisory Council on the WIC Website!

You can view the minutes of Advisory Council meetings as well as this and future Updates on the WIC Advisory Council page of the WIC website at: <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/wic/Pages/wic-advisory.aspx>

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Participation

As you can see from the Participation graph below, our numbers are slightly lower than they were last year at this time. A few days of closure for winter weather and the typical slowdown in the cold weather months likely had an impact on the slow start to the 2016 numbers. Declines in participation continue to be a concern nationwide. Maryland WIC still remains ahead of the national curve in comparison to the average decrease in participation from January 2015 to January 2016. Nationally, the numbers dropped 4.5%, while in Maryland the numbers dropped 2.8%; in the Mid-Atlantic region, only the District of Columbia had less of a drop than Maryland. We continue to reach out to current and potential participants through ads on transit and in shopping malls, on local radio and media outlets.



Legislative Update

Child Nutrition Reauthorization

According to the National WIC Association, the House Education and Workforce Committee's draft of their Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill does not include some of the provisions that were included in the Senate Child Nutrition Bill passed by the Senate Agriculture Committee in January. Specifically, the current draft of the House bill differs from the Senate bill in that it does not include a provision to give states the option to enroll children in WIC until their sixth birthday or until they enter full day kindergarten. It also excludes the option for states to certify infants for up to two years.

For updates on the progress of reauthorization, check out the NWA website at: www.nwica.org

Federal Fiscal Year 2017 Funding

The FY2017 Spending bill was passed by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies on April 13. The bill proposes \$451 million less than the FY2016 mark for agricultural programs. WIC is funded at the same level as the FY 2016 funding at \$6.35 billion with \$60 million for the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program. The full Appropriations Committee markup of the Agriculture spending bill will take place later in the month. Stay tuned for updates on both the House and Senate Appropriations.