

Next weekly meeting to discuss Covid-19's impact on WIC operations.

Wednesday April 15th, 2020

Join Via Google hangout

<https://meet.google.com/duu-xqwp-hyk>

Or via Phone

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4.10.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q: As we approach the 2/3 and 1/3 food package proration dates, if we certify someone new to WIC, do we still use those guidelines or since these are pandemic times do we issue a full food package?

- A. Continue to follow policy ([235.02](#)), but if there are concerns about a specific family and their nutritional needs, contact your nutrition consultant to discuss if overriding proration is appropriate.

4.7.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. How should we mark appointment type and status for Certification appointments where participants are found to be over income?

- A. Mark these participants as seen and the appointment type changed to Visit -Video or Visit-Phone, according to how the contact was made.

4.2.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. How do you document completed appointments that were scheduled in a group nutrition class?

- A. Remove the participants from the group appointment and create a new Nutrition Education appointment for the family, marking the appropriate WIC appointment type per the guidance that was provided.

4.1.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. Do we need to make any changes to the appointment type when we complete wichealth.org follow up appointments?

- A. Continue to follow the guidance provided on documenting whether appointments were completed by phone, video or no show with benefits provided.

3.31.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. Why can't the Appointment status be changed instead of the appointment type?

- A. Appointment type is the only editable field that could be changed to be able to capture this information that is being requested on the daily reports that are being provided to the Governor's Office.

Q. We are starting to receive calls for appointments in April as to what to suspect in regards to if we can still do video and phone appointments. Do we have a date that this will still continue through?

- A. The FNS waiver for physical presence is effective through May 31, 2020. At this time, the plan is to continue operating as is until told otherwise as the situation unfolds.

Q. How should we deal with brand new certs that we put on our schedule but they don't turn in proofs? What about the ones where we get the proofs but are unable to reach on the phone? Same issues with recerts?

- A. Continue to reach out and follow policy to certify or recertify participants.

3.30.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. For the changes to how we mark appointments in the scheduler we don't have to go back and do this to all the ones we have already finished?

- A. This is only moving forward. All past appointments do not need to be changed.

Q. Once benefits are issued for the "No Show - Benefits Issued" do we go back and change the status back to "red" no show?

- A. No, do not change the status to No Show.

Q. Is there an easy way to keep track of the appointment types we have changed in case we get in contact with them later or they call back to see what type of appointment it was?

- A. We suggest using the "notes" section of the appointment to document the type of appointment it is/was when making the WIC appointment type change.

3.27.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. How do we handle the scheduler for previously scheduled appointments?

- A. For each scheduled appointment handled remotely, staff is to edit the scheduled appointment and create a new one in its place with one of the new appointment types that have been added to the WIC appointment type list Visit-Video Visit-phone No Show/missed- benefits issued. Once benefits are issued the scheduler will be marked with the status of seen. At this point it is okay that the WIC appt type doesn't indicate if it's a cert/recert/HU/etc. As we are more interested in knowing how the service was provided (i.e. phone/video, missed appt but benefits still issued).

Q. If we are doing appointments remotely, what would be considered a "missed appointment"?

- A. If an agency is unsuccessful in connecting with a family for their appointment (can't reach them or they don't call), benefits should be issued for up to 3 months if eligible.

Q. If we are unable to complete an appointment and we issue 3 months of benefits, should we schedule the family for what they need in 3 months as we normally would have if we had seen them?

- A. Correct, schedule the appointment that would normally be due in 3 months like if you had seen them. For example, if they were scheduled for a CHU today and it wasn't completed, schedule them for a nutrition education appointment in 3 months.

- Q. How do we record Hgb results for a certification or health update appointment when it's due?
- A. If they are unable to obtain a Hgb result, choose the option "No Test Performed" in the Blood Work panel in Focus and select the reason "Physical Presence Waived".

3.26.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q. Has there been any discussion about allowing participants to use eWIC to order foods online and either have them delivered or available for pick-up at the store?

- A. There is an NWA workgroup that should be setup soon to talk about online ordering/curbside pickup/home delivery options. That doesn't mean it would be allowed by USDA, or something we could implement in a quick way with our eWIC processor. We won't know more until this group starts meeting and we see what other states have to say and suggest. I do know that SNAP in Iowa has been pilot testing with Walmart, who is already a WIC vendor (and Amazon who is not, so not a consideration here). To accomplish that, there were system requirement changes needed to their processor system, which is Conduent and not CDP.

Q. If we don't get a Rx by month's end, can we issue three months of benefits as long as we try to continue getting the Rx?

- A. No, continue to issue on a month-to-month basis per current policy. This could change depending on the results of a waiver that Iowa has submitted to FNS.

Q. Sometimes parents do not know the infant's or child's measurements or even the last time they saw a doctor. So, question: should we just make up a weight and length that keeps their curve consistent?

- A. If there is no recent measurement at the physician's office and the parent has no estimate, use the guidance provided in the Completing Certifications when Physical Presence is Waived and the Completing Health Updates when the Participant is Not Present documents on the WIC web portal and make a best estimate to keep them on their growth curve.

3.25.2020 Questions from local agencies:

Q: We are receiving phone calls from families who have lost their job and will not receive wages until they go back to work sometime in April or May. When we use the last 30 days of income, they are over income. If we average their last paycheck over March and April, they are eligible. How should we proceed?

- A. Please see Policy 215.44, page 2 regarding irregular income calculations.

Q: Some families have not received their unemployment benefits. Should we ask them to call back once they know how much they will receive?

- A. Please see Policy 215.45, page 1 on prospective income determination.

- Q. Do you have a YouTube video available for participants on how to use WIC?
A. No, there is not currently a YouTube video available for participants.

3.24.2020 Questions from local agencies:

- Q. When using Zoom, does the client's computer security matter or just the hosting site?
A. The security is within the Zoom program and not on the computer or device on either end of the call/video. Agencies should continue following contract requirements and guidance provided for computer security as normal.
- Q. Can breast pump agreements for loans, rentals and personal pumps be sent via text like the other proofs?
A. Yes, this can be done similar to the guidance provided for other agreements, such as signed statements or request for information forms. If agencies are meeting with participants to pick up a pump in person, the agreement should be signed normally.
- Q. Can local agency staff work from home on their personal computers, cell phones or devices by downloading Focus?
A. No, agencies that implement work from home procedures should follow guidance in the "Additional Requirements for Working from Home" document, policy 220.15, and contract requirements.
- Q. Do local agencies need to have their staff sign a telework agreement to be able to work remotely?
A. No, USDA does not require a telework agreement to be signed for local agency staff to work remotely. However, a local agency may choose to have staff sign a telework agreement that their agency requires. Policy and guidance shared with local agencies should be followed regarding working from home.
- Q. If staff will be working from home, should an exception to policy be submitted through Iowa Grants?
A. An exception to policy is NOT needed.

3.23.2020 Questions from local agencies:

- Q. If a family misses an appointment, like a HU, how many months of benefits do we issue and when do we reschedule them for?
A. Issue 3 months and schedule the family for what they need in 3 months as you normally would.
- Q. How do we handle issuing breast pumps when working remotely?
A. You could use Zoom or phones for breast pump explanation/demonstration before an issuance. Participants can then meet staff at the clinic (or other predetermined location to pick up the pump).

Q. How do families return formulas they purchased if they need a formula change when LA staff is working remotely?

- A. Encourage participants to purchase smaller amounts if trying a new formula/changing formula if it is possible in order to limit the amount of formula that might need to be returned if formula changes. Otherwise, contact your nutrition consultant for guidance on individual situations.

Q. Do agencies continue to operate this way (utilizing waivers, remotely, etc.) until official orders are lifted and we tell them to change the model or once churches, etc. start to open up, are they free to go back into the community if they want to?

- A. Follow the Governor's Public Health Emergency Declaration as well as following your agency's policy and guidance.

Q. Can information be added to the WIC Shopper app?

- A. We are adding info to the app but it has to be short and concise or it gets buried. Participants also have to click on the banner to access the full information and should be told that it is being updated so even if they have clicked on it to read it before, it's possible new items have been added.

Q. Several agencies have asked for confirmation that certifications can be completed by phone if staff are working from home. (Asking if they are required to use Zoom).

- A. Appointments where participants are not physically present can be completed by phone or telehealth. Agencies are not required to use Zoom if using telehealth. This is a recommendation only.

Q. How does an agency go about using Zoom with participants? Do participants need to install Zoom on their phone in order to get a meeting invite? Do they need email?

- A. Pts. wouldn't need to have Zoom, agency would send clients an email or a text with a link to the connection meeting invite. Refer to the Zoom website for info on how to do this. The only person who has to have a Zoom account would be the staff person setting up the meeting. Only requirements would be the receiving person (participant) would have to have a phone that has data (not a flip phone, call only phone, etc.)

Q. Where did the rumor about WIC benefits being turned off March 29 and new cards being issued come from?

- A. Certain local agencies in Austin, Texas have instructed their staff to close clinics. They are encouraging clients to use their March benefits by March 29 because they are offline EBT, so they have to then hotcard everyone's card and mail out new ones (since people can't come in to get new benefits loaded).

Q. How long is the physical presence and anthro waived for? Do local agencies need to start planning on having a lot of individuals come in in 3 or 6 months?

A. Iowa has been approved a waiver to waive physical presence for all appointments which includes deferring anthropometric and bloodwork requirements necessary to determine nutrition risk, but staff must still attempt to the best of his/her ability to assess nutrition risk based on the information available through online communication and/or referral data. This waiver is currently approved through May 31, 2020, but could be lifted if the current situation changes prior to that date. Please see the guidance document shared by the State office on completing certifications/health updates without a participant present.

Q. Has there been any follow-up on waiving proofs that was brought up in the teleconference?

A. Iowa has been approved a waiver to waive physical presence as well as the requirements for anthropometric measurements and blood work. for all appointments. Iowa plans to apply for other waivers and additional information will be shared as they become available.

Q. What instructions do we need to send for separation of duties? Business as usual?

A. At this point, yes, maintain separation of duties.

Q. If there is a shelter in place order, will LA WIC staff still be able to go into the clinic to provide services remotely?

A. WIC is an essential service so must remain open. If the agency allows, staff may work from home. Please see the document titled "Additional Requirements for Working from Home" for more information about working from home.