

Retailer Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes (November 6, 2008)

Virginia WIC Program
(10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

On Thursday, November 6, 2008, the quarterly Virginia WIC Advisory meeting was held via video conference amongst four locations; Fredericksburg (site facilitator, June Thompson), Roanoke (site facilitator, Sheila Brewer), Richmond (meeting and site facilitator, Ephraim Ewing) and Norfolk, Virginia (site facilitator, Freda Bolling). An “800” line was also available to authorized stores and corporate contacts.

***Attendees – All Nations Food Market, Wal-Mart SuperCenter, Defense Commissary Agency, , Payless Supermarket, Farmer Foods, K-VA-T, Food Lion, Shoppers Food Warehouse, Super K-Mart, , Reids SuperSave Market, Star Valu, Whites Fresh Foods, Giant of PA (Martins), Giant of Maryland, Food Star, Wades Supermarket, Slaughter’s Supermarket, Kroger, Sunnyside Market, Grants Supermarket, Wilbun’s Supermarket, , Deltaville Market, Farm Fresh, Camellia Foods, Miller’s Market, MDI- Distributor, Virginia Retail Federation, Virginia Petroleum Convenience and Grocery Association and Virginia Retailer Association.*

The following is a summary of agenda items discussed.

****Summary Site Expectations – (all)**

- 1. Learn the impact of the 2009 food package changes.*
- 2. Status of EWIC*
- 3. Obtain information regarding 2009 food package changes/allowable foods*
- 4. Obtain more information on the cash value voucher (CVV)*
- 5. Provide positive feedback/compliment on the Cashier Training DVD*
- 6. Gather information regarding future changes/updates*
- 7. What’s next? Selection and Authorization*
- 8. New information for first time attendees.*

****2009 Food Package Basics – Allowable Food Application Process –**

***Power point presentation (Meghan Garrett, Nutrition Liaison)*

- 1) Working with multiple states to implement a rebate contract for purchasing infant foods*
- 2) \$6, \$8 and \$10 cash value vouchers for fresh/canned fruits and vegetables:*
 - Frozen vegetables will be looked at with onset of new computer system*
 - Educational materials will be developed and used with participants and Retailers explaining food choice changes.*
 - Suggestion made to add “No organic fruits or vegetables” to the NOT Allowable List.*
 - Under consideration by WIC Program only allowing private label/store brand products only for canned fruits and vegetables.*

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2009 Food Package Basic Discussion – Continued...

- *Cash Value Vouchers are not redeemable at Farmers Market locations – State unsure if \$5 Farmer’s Market Program will be offered in 2009.*
 - *No plans exist in 2009 to collect prices for fresh fruits and vegetables. In implementing EWIC this option will be revisited.*
- 3) *Complete review of allowed cereals will be completed by the Nutrition team.*
- 4) *Quantity of milk and dairy products prescribed to participants will be reduced.*
- *Milk will be allowed in quart sizes when prescribed on the food instrument.*
- 5) *New product offering will be canned salmon for breastfeeding women.*
- *Women will have to choose between tuna or salmon and this choice will be printed on the FIs given to them.*
- 6) *Egg quantities will be reduced to one dozen*
- 7) *Infants will no longer be offered juice:*
- *Will prescribe 64 oz. juices*
 - *Under consideration if only store brands of juice will be prescribed...a final decision has not been made.*
- 8) *Dry beans or peanut butter will be allowed (canned beans may be offered in future).*
- 9) *Infant baby food products will be brand specific (contract should be announced in March 2009)*
- 10) *Retailer survey was issued to retailers to capture available products, store brands and package sizes (Ephraim Ewing, Vendor Liaison presented survey findings).*
- 11) *Participant surveys to be distributed in local agencies in November – what does participant like/want to use?*
- 12) *An allowable food informational package was mailed to food manufacturers and/or distributors November 4th.*
- *Application requires nutrition info for new and current products.*
 - *Each product requires its own application*
 - *Application can be downloaded from:*
www.vahealth.org/wic/Appendix%2012.pdf
 - *Manufacturers must submit their applications for their products by 1/15/2009.*
 - *Completed applications must be sent certified mail.*
- 13) *Food instruments that prescribe new food choices will begin to be distributed to program participants in July (2009) with “first date to spend” as of “October 1, 2009” or later.*
- 14) *Minimal overlap between old and new food instrument will exist.*
- 15) *Retailer training classes will be held in 2009 (July – October) which will satisfy annual training requirement for retailers.*
- 16) *Minimum Stocking Requirements will have to be updated to reflect some of the new food choices.*

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****EWIC Update (Donna Seward)**

- Study/project is currently on hold
- Crossroads System is not an EWIC system – must be EBT ready

****Role and Function of RAC (Donna Seward)**

- 1) WIC and Retailers must work together without legislation intervention.
 - Several meetings have been held with Virginia Department of Health Senior Management, Retail Merchants Association, selective corporate contacts and other interested parties to discuss the use of a retailer limiting criteria (i.e., slots) and restructuring the peer group (BEA) methodology being used.
- 2) Recognize differences – RAC is a positive venue for WIC and Retailers to voice opinions and offer suggestions regarding issues. Group must communicate effectively and arrive at a reasonable consensus, with the exception of those issues requiring USDA approval.

****Retailer Selection and Authorization Update (Sheila Brewer)**

- 1). A total of 850 store applicant's qualifications were evaluated
 - 37 new store authorizations occurred
 - 26 Corporate store applicants' authorization statuses are still pending.

****Miscellaneous Issues – (Sheila Brewer)**

- 1). Training Opportunities 2009
 - Trainer certification/recertification training meetings:
 - New Certification – March 4-5 (10 a.m.-4 p.m. – Richmond)
 - Recertification – 4 sessions held in May at various sites
- 2) Currently there are 64 Certified Corporate Trainers which provide support to approximately 650 stores.
- 3) Separate training sessions will be offered by WIC Program staff to independent stores in a centralized location, above and beyond the training being provided by corporate trainers.
- 4) Staffing Changes – Greg Chappell is no longer working with the WIC Program/Department of Health.
 - Stores who were assigned to Gregory should contact Sheila Brewer until a long term support solution is implemented.

****Benefits – (all)**

- 1) Increased meeting participation
- 2) 2009 Food List item selection available to participants
- 3) Informational gathering opportunity to begin training initiatives on new food list.
- 4) Ability to communicate needs on behalf of grocers across State
- 5) Power point presentation (Allowable Foods 2009)
- 6) EWIC Update
- 7) Role of Advisory Committee discussion
- 8) WIC's policy decision to eliminate the \$.99 cap on cash value vouchers

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Benefits Continued...

- 9) Received heads-up so private label items can be considered for inclusion on the 2009 Allowable Food list.
- 10) Agency's commitment to continue emphasizing private label foods/products.
- 11) Ability to discuss and implement meetings every other month until 2009 food choice changes is implemented.
- 12) Meeting available in Roanoke, Virginia

**** Concerns (all)**

- 1) Massive training undertaking required for 2009 food list changes
 - o Participant and retailer –will the burden be placed on retailer to train participants on the new food choices?
- 2) Confusion with amount of new information provided each meeting
- 3) Confusion that will exist among participants/cashiers in handling WIC Farmers Market FI versus Cash Value Vouchers.
- 4) Availability of the 1 pound package of corn tortilla
- 5) Quantity requirements for minimum stocking of fresh produce would force small stores to throw away portion of unsold inventory.
- 6) Obtaining retailer training for 2009 food package changes in a timely fashion before implementation date.
- 7) Over \$.99 cents limit for 2009 Cash Value Food Instruments
- 8) WIC Program should offer a training module to retailers and participants on the allowable foods changes.
- 9) Can another Train-the-Trainer session be offered in the Tidewater area?

Next Steps – (all)

- 1) Implement procedure which allows participants to pay overage (out-of-pocket in excess of cash value voucher amount).
- 2) Suggestion: provide earlier training on 2009 food changes
- 3) Suggestion: RAC should meet more often than quarterly...proposed that committee meets every other month for shorter period of time until the food changes are finalized and/or implemented.
- 4) Next RAC Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2009 10 a.m.
- 5) At this meeting: Revisit the suggestion to create a smaller work group, to
 - Work on developing the new minimum stocking requirement
 - Work on identifying what items to collect prices for via RSMS.
- 6) Suggestion: Smaller retailers who may not be able to attend RAC meeting should have minutes forwarded to them (not everyone has internet access).
- 7) Each meeting invitation to Retailers should have a copy of the previous meetings minutes sent to them.
- 8) WIC Program will send out a letter advising corporate contacts when the Trainer certification/recertification training sessions will be held, who can attend and how to register.