

**Virginia WIC Program  
Retailer Advisory Meeting Minutes  
Meeting Date: January 14, 2016**

**Retail Store Attendees:** Americana Grocery and Megamart (Alexandria)

**State WIC Office Attendees:** Al Astley, Alex Acharya, Freda Bolling, Sheila Brewer, Jennifer Trower, Mike Welch (Division Director), Paula Garrett (WIC Program Manager), Brian Tun (UPC Coordinator)

**Conference Call Attendees:** Food Lion, Kroger, Commissary, Farm Fresh, Bestway, DECA Headquarters, DECA Dahlgren, Old Town Supermarket, Mick or Mack, Safeway, Priceless Foods, Wade Supermarket, and Walmart.

**Division Director Update: (Michael Welch, Division Director)**

- WIC Program Participation: February numbers are lower than last year.
- WIC Media Campaign: Major launch, Virginia was provided extra funding and will be working with the VA Broadcasting Association for TV and radio advertising.
- On June 30, 2016 formula rebate with Abbott ends. VA WIC Program is soliciting a new infant formula rebate contract. Stores will be notified of the new contract award and start date, as soon as this information is available.
- Child Nutrition Program not reauthorized yet through FFY16 Federal budget allocations, but do not anticipate funding to be an issue. VA WIC Program requested funds for special projects like the development of a Cashier Training DVD for EBT.
- Summer Food Program- Last summer was the largest increase of any state, besides TX, with text messaging and help from our retail partners. VA WIC Program plans to ask for help again next summer to end childhood hunger.
- General Assembly: monitoring a bill stating that all employees have break time to breastfeed and cannot fire someone if they breastfeed.

**Administrative Issues: Paula Garrett, WIC Program Manager**

- New WIC Approved Food List Training
- Webinars schedule for corporate contacts, trainers, independent stores and other interest parties during the months of February and March.
- Independent stores-optional webinar training will not be mandatory training,
- Working With WIC Retailer Bulletin – special WIC Approved Food List edition (January 2016).
- Proposed release date for the new WIC Approved Food List and Formula Flyer is March 15, 2016.
- Training for local agency WIC staff on the new WIC Approved Food List and Infant Formula flyer is scheduled for January 27, 2016.
- Overview of changes to WIC Approved Food List (2016):
  - Layout different, tabs
  - Some of the terms used are different
  - New sections – how to complete a complaint/incident form?
  - WIC eligible brands
  - Twin packs of baby foods are included
  - Organic fruits and vegetables are included

- Diced tomatoes are included
- Tomato juice will not be included
- Cow's milk and specialty milk separated
- Electronic version of the WIC Approved Food List should be posted on the VDH website January 27, 2016
- Alimentum powder formula - Container size will be reduced from 16 oz to 12.1 oz cans size. Reconstituted amount will increase with the number of cans prescribed
- Alimentum powder formula - EBT cannot support both cans sizes at same time—transition starts in April 2016 to July 2016
- Alimentum powder formula - Need hard start and end date for UPC—rolling start and stop dates cannot be accommodated.
- At least a one month transition period will be needed to remove items from APL
- VA WIC Program asks retailers to share the Working With WIC Retailer bulletin (January 2016) with staff and stores. Questions pertaining to the new WIC Approved Food List should be sent to the State WIC Office (either Paula Garrett or Sheila Brewer).

**New Redemption Report - Average Redemption by peer group, plus 15% Sheila Brewer, Vendor Compliance Manager.**

- First time to release reimbursement structure because not to exceed (NTE) values have stabilized
- New stores that apply will be able to see if their prices are “competitive”.
- Stores with non-competitive prices will be able to see how far above the average redemption level they are.
- Stores can identify redemption levels by peer group average
- Will publish on a monthly basis on WIC website
- No recoupment process now, but it will be implemented in future
- Send questions pertaining to this new redemption report to Sheila Brewer, Vendor Compliance Manager.

**Minimum Stocking Requirement (MSR) – Sheila Brewer, Vendor Compliance Manager**

- Looking at redemption data for Similac Advance Earlyshield concentrate and this product will be eliminated from the MSR. VA WIC asks if we should add another “rebateable” product, i.e., Similac Sensitive powder to the MSR.
- VA WIC Program will wait until new formula contract is awarded before deciding upon this issue.
- VA WIC Program will send out an email note beginning of February 2016 about new minimum stocking requirement
- VA WIC Program will also send out an email when a new formula contract is awarded.
- Two new websites for VA WIC Program released on Jan 8th
- Websites are still a work in process
- Contact Al Astley if links don't work. Also you will need to update your link favorites to access certain webpages.

### **Training session for certified trainers – Sheila Brewer, Vendor Compliance Manager**

- We have consolidated questions from last set of trainings. This questions and answers document will be send out to corporate trainers and corporate contacts and post it on our web page.

### **Annual compliance letter reminder – Sheila Brewer, Vendor Compliance Manager**

- VA WIC Program does certain compliance monitoring procedures to determine a store's level of compliance, including:
  - ✓ Secret shopper compliance buys
  - ✓ Infant formula reviews
  - ✓ Desk review of formula inventory documentation
  - ✓ Unannounced stocking visits
- A new compliance technique that will be implemented in 2016 is comparing redemptions to posted prices. This procedure includes the VA WIC Program collecting prices during an onsite monitoring visit then creating an ad hoc report that identifies the reimbursement for that same day and completing a comparison.
- A summary report/letter of the Program's findings will be mailed out to the store/corporate contact, if applicable.

### **Staffing Updates:**

- Jessica Owen-Day left VDH and is now employed at USDA's national office EBT unit. Anticipate her position should be filled by March 2016.
- New staff member on the Vendor Team: Jennifer Trower.
- Will hire a contractor to assist in meeting some of the data analysis work.

### **Benefits:**

- New food brochure informative
- Retailer bulletin very helpful to explain changes,
- New format for WIC Approved Food brochure
- Infant formula rebate contract
- Alimentum formula size change
- Changes to the Minimum Stocking Requirement

### **Concerns:**

- New website not finished; a work still in progress

### **Next steps:**

- Attend next Retailer Advisory committee meeting; scheduled for April 21, 2016