

# Meeting Minutes

**Subject: Retailer Advisory Teleconference**

**Date/Time: April 20, 2017/10:00 AM**

**Location: 12<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, VDH**

The meeting began at 10:00 am. The following people were in attendance: Paula Garrett, Alex Acharya, Bob Altermatt, Al Astley, Freda Bolling, Jennifer Trower, and Brian Tun (Ephraim Ewing dialed in). Stores represented via the telephone: Damons, DECA HQ, Farm Fresh, Food Lion, Giant Foods, Grant's Supermarket, Old Lake Market, Old Town Supermarket, Reid's Supermarket, SuperValu, Todos, Virginia Retail Federation, Wades and Wal-Mart.

Recorder: Al Astley

- The meeting began at 10:00 am.
- Paula Garrett (WIC Program Manager) provided an update of the WIC program
  - USDA WIC Budget Reduction/Continuing Resolution -- The WIC Program is currently under a Continuing Resolution (CR) until 4/28, at which time a budget or another CR will be passed. The proposed FFY 2017 budget is \$6.2 billion, a reduction of 0.2 billion from 2016. This shortfall should have little impact on Virginia WIC due to the other cost-saving initiatives in place. Full budget passage isn't expected before summer of 2017.
  - WIC on Wheels – This effort investigates the value of having a mobile alternative to the traditional WIC clinic and was established by a three-year USDA grant for \$460,000. This will be a cooperative effort among six Hampton Roads Health Districts, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Old Dominion University. Two mobile homes will be obtained and will move the traditional WIC clinic to a retail store's parking lot. The first trial will occur in May at a Norfolk Farm Fresh.
  - Update Food List/National Brands -- Work on producing a 2018 version of the Approved Food List (FL) has begun recently. The new FL is expected to allow national brands of cereal, cheese and peanut butter. It will allow whole wheat pasta, yogurt, and all brands of beans. These changes are being considered to encourage WIC participation. Program cost, cost containment, peer group impact, and Not To Exceed Price impact will also be considered. A separate announcement to all WIC Retailers requesting new product information will be sent later this year, and the new FL is targeted for distributed by April 2018.
  - Weight of the State/Paula's shopping experience – The Weight of the State is a biennial conference to address obesity prevention in children through age eighteen. The conference brings together experts in recreation, education, and nutrition to work toward holistic approaches to reducing childhood obesity. As part of the conference, Paula went on her first eWIC shopping experience in her 20 years of working with the WIC Program. In spite of her knowledge of and experience with WIC, she too had

several issues as a first-time eWIC shopper and has a new appreciation for the difficulties participants have while shopping for WIC foods.

- National WIC Association – Based on this week-long conference attended by most of the WIC programs around the country, Virginia appears to be ahead of the curve in terms of technology, statistical analysis, and data availability. However several states had innovative approaches to increasing WIC participation by non-traditional means that deserve additional consideration.
- Summer Food Service Program Texting – Like last year, stores will be requested to change their store receipts to include information for their customers to send a text message to obtain locations of Summer Food Service sites.
- Alex Acharya (WIC Vendor Compliance Manager) provided an update of the Vendor Compliance Team
  - Contract Reauthorization – Every three years all WIC authorized stores are required to receive “interactive” training and to complete a new Retailer Agreement to prepare them to be reauthorized for the new contract period. Stores not receiving this training or not completing their retailer agreement will not be authorized for WIC on 10/1/2017. There are two version of the training being offered:
    - On 3/24/2017 Virginia WIC certified retail trainers and specific corporate office staff were emailed an invitation to attend a WIC reauthorization webinar.
    - There will be two WIC Certified Trainer webinars on 6/6/2017 and 6/16/2017.
    - The primary WIC contact at the corporate home office will receive the retailer agreement package by email on 6/1/2017. The email will include the cover letter with instructions on how to complete.
    - The corporate home office must collect all WIC Certified Trainer reports and email to WIC\_retailer@vdh.virginia.gov as a PDF file with their retailer agreement package.
    - The retailer agreement package must be completed and returned to the WIC Program central office by email to WIC\_retailer@vdh.virginia.gov no later than 8/16/2017.
    - The original signed retailer agreement must be sent by US Postal mail to the WIC Program central office no later than 8/16/2017.
    - WIC Certified Trainers and corporate office staff can contact Ephraim Ewing at Ephraim.Ewing@vdh.virginia.gov or by telephone (804) 864-7813 for assistance.
    - Independent Training -- Stores without Certified WIC Trainers will receive their training by attending one of ten mandatory face-to-face training sessions being offered in April and May throughout the state. Dates and locations are available in the March edition of the WIC Retailer eBulletin.

All stores/certified trainers must submit completed Retailer Agreements and certificates of completed training no later than 8/15/2017 so that their information can be validated and updated in the eWIC system to allow them to continue processing in the new contract period which begins 10/1/2017.

- Cashier Training Video – the video has been finalized and is being duplicated on DVD and flash drives, which will be distributed in the near future.
- The Excel version of daily VA APL file is available for retailers to view or download from the WIC retailers website through this link: Current Approved Product List.
- It is located at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/wic-retailers/resources/> - then select “Current Approved Product List” under “Other”.
- Date/time of current APL file is printed on the worksheet’s name tab.
- Contact Brian Tun at [brian.tun@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:brian.tun@vdh.virginia.gov) if you have any questions.
- Benefits: APL available on the Resources website; Reauthorization timeline
- Concerns: Potential WIC budget reduction
- Next Steps: none
- **The Date for the Next Meeting is July 13, 2017 at 10:00 AM.**