

Virginia WIC Retailer Bulletin | February 2019

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### [Message from Paula](#)

Happy New Year! The year got off to an exciting start with the partial government shutdown. We are speaking daily with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) employees to insure that the WIC Program continues to operate. The Virginia WIC Program has funding to allow reimbursements for WIC purchases and to cover payroll and other major expenses through March 2019, so at least for now, please understand that **the status of the Virginia WIC Program is business as usual**. You will be notified as we become aware of any anticipated changes to this status.

I wish you the best for the coming year, and thank you for your continued support of the Virginia WIC Program.

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### [New eBulletin Format](#)

In hopes of increasing the readability of our bulletins, we will be sending a shorter, more frequent eBulletin that can be read quickly. Our annual training edition eBulletin normally sent in July will be an exception, due to the mandatory content as prescribed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture WIC guidance. Please let us know what you think about this change, and as always, we appreciate any suggestions on topics of interest.

### [Yogurt Issues](#)

Since November 2018, there has been an issue with the redemption of yogurt. Some stores may have been overpaid for yogurt, and some participants have been able to redeem multiple containers in error. As of 12/19/2018, no new prescriptions have been issued for yogurt. We are working with our technology team to fix the issue and we will provide updates on the situation.

### [Annual Compliance Letter](#)

Annually, the Virginia WIC Program makes this compliance and program integrity reminder available to authorized WIC stores and related staff. The WIC Program performs several important compliance monitoring functions, including Inventory audits, Unannounced on-site Monitoring Reviews, "Secret shopper" compliance buys and Desk review of formula purchasing records. A copy of the letter is on our "Resources" page and also [here](#).

### [Certified Mail being Returned](#)

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information that may require follow-up action or affect your store's authorization status are sent via certified mail directly to the store. Additionally, as a courtesy, we email a copy of the letter (notification of impending action) to your corporate headquarters and/or point of contact on file. Often, for our records, we send certified letters with "Return Receipt Requested", which require that store personnel sign as proof of delivery for this type of correspondence. Recently, there has been an increase in returned unclaimed/undeliverable certified mail from the post office due to lack of signatures. Please follow up with personnel to ensure they sign for certified mail and route them to management in a timely manner.

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### [Customer Service Reminders](#)

Here are a few reminders on how to deliver outstanding customer service when problems occur:

- Greet your customers with a "Hello", eye contact, and a smile.
- Be aware of your tone of voice, body language, and attitude.
- Be respectful and patient with every customer no matter how they pay for their food.
- When a customer exceeds the cash value benefit, ask politely if they prefer to pay the difference or not to purchase the item.
- Call for management assistance quickly when needed.
- Give customers the service you like to receive when shopping.
- Remain calm even when customers are in a hurry and do not want to wait.
- Be patient with each customer, it helps to reduce problems.
- Listen to customers as if you mean it. Repeat back their concerns when you can.
- Speak in a pleasant tone and tell customers what can be done. For example, say "The brands of grape juice that are allowed are \_\_\_\_\_.", instead of "This juice is not allowed."
- Seek to exceed customer expectations and improve their shopping experience.
- Be willing and ready to correct errors. We all make mistakes.
- Tell the customer the problem will be reported and the store hopes to have it corrected by their next shopping visit.
- Always thank your customers for shopping at your store!

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### [Next Retailer Advisory eMeeting](#)

The next Retailer Advisory eMeeting is scheduled for Thursday April 11, 2019 at 2:00 PM (1:50 PM Roll Call). Invitations are being sent via email, but if you didn't get one and want to be added to our invitation list, please send an email request to [WIC\\_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:WIC_Retailer@vdh.virginia.gov). The meetings are scheduled quarterly and generally last less than an hour (sometimes less than 30 minutes), and provide an opportunity for State WIC employees to have two-way, direct communication with our Retailer customers. Minutes from previous meetings are available at the top of our Retailer Resources webpage.

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### [Important Links](#)

Find important links and Virginia WIC contact information [here](#).

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