

New Year New Ideas



2016 — Dreams, Wishes, and Plans

Happy New Year to all at Texas WIC! I hope your 2015 was full of personal growth, good health, and success. As we looked towards the coming year we themed this issue of the *Texas WIC News* “New Year, New Ideas” with the intention to challenge you to move forward with big dreams and a renewed sense of purpose.

Whatever goals you may have for 2016, the Power of Influence can be an impactful tool to help you achieve them. You’ve likely already heard how this unique training increases retention, breastfeeding rates, and job satisfaction for staff. Those who have attended the Power of Influence report success not only for their agencies, but also in their personal lives outside of the clinic. Read the testimonials and learn how to transform your agency on page 4.

Speaking of successes, please join me in congratulating City of Dallas, Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, and Hidalgo County for receiving the Loving Support Award of Excellence. These agencies are being recognized for the hard work they’ve put forth in addressing societal barriers, building key coalitions, and enhancing their peer counselor programs. Read more about the award and the Loving Support program on page 14.

Additionally, I’d like to applaud each of you — last year you all learned and accomplished many things, making Texas WIC even better than before. To kick off this year, we asked agencies to let us know what you envisioned 2016 to look like. Several of you took that challenge and shared your dreams, wishes, and plans with us. Read more about what these stellar agencies will be doing, and get ideas for your own agency, on page 12.

No matter what your specific goals are for this coming year, we all connect in the mission to help families be their best. We support them in times of need and help them set the stage for success. For me, a new year brings promise of innovation and opportunity, and those things won’t be realized without challenges. As long as we remain committed to what our program does for people, then our compass will always be pointed in the right direction as we make decisions along the way.

“Always remember you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world” – HARRIET TUBMAN

From the Texas WIC Director

- Lindsay Rodgers, M.A., R.D., L.D.



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Wake the Dream



by Kelley Reed, RD
Nutrition Education Consultant



Top photo: POI presenters, Jessi Cano and Kelley Reed dressed in silver and bronze to match an agency's training day theme. Above: LA 90, Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic staff working in clinic groups. Below: LA 76, Outreach Health Services staff proudly presenting their final group project. Bottom left photo: LA 39, Northeast Texas Public Health District staff proudly presenting their group project. Bottom right: LA 77, UTMB Regional spreading the spirit of influence with an "LA 77 has the power to influence!" cake.



Wake the dream

At the end of the day, do you leave the clinic feeling like you've done your duty but you don't quite feel fulfilled? Does it feel like you're stuck in a routine or a rut? Have you forgotten what led you to a career with WIC? Does it seem like your participants want in and out with benefits and don't value nutrition education and WIC's many other services? Do you want to learn strategies that can dramatically improve lives? If so, I'd like to invite you to consider investing one day to attend the Power of Influence (POI) training to learn how influence awakens both staff and participant dreams.

What is the Power of Influence?

POI is a unique training. It focuses on emotion-based messaging, going beyond just good customer service, and discusses putting the "human element" back into WIC services. POI training focuses on principles that have been proven to work in a variety of settings, including WIC. The training addresses several concerns that have come up state-wide, including participation, retention, breastfeeding duration, and client and staff satisfaction.

POI is a full-day, interactive training designed for all agency staff to attend. Six influence principles are covered starting with the research on each principle. The second half of the day is spent learning how to apply each principle in the clinic. Our goal is for attendees to leave the training and apply the POI skills they've spent the day practicing and learning.

The training is made up of a combination of learning styles including lecture, role play videos, testimonial videos, and group breakout sessions. We take a team building approach by weaving in many opportunities to work together in groups throughout the day. The day is filled with brainstorming, goal setting, and lots of smiles, laughter, tears, and applause.

What's being said about POI?

We've received feedback from over 2,000 POI-trained local agency staff. Take a look at what some staff are saying about the training:

"This training is a very positive change for the WIC world to help families reach their goals in life."

"You will be empowered."

"It will change you."

"Interesting ways to communicate with our participants to make them want to come back to WIC until children turn 5."

"I would recommend for all agencies to participate in one. We could all benefit and it reminds us of what we are really here for."

"It really changed the way I feel about my job. Not just earning a paycheck."

"It can be used in your everyday life. We all want to be that person who can influence people for good."

"It is very educational and upbeat, not boring at all!"



Top 10 reasons to attend a POI training:

- 1 Training fulfills annual customer service requirement.
- 2 No need to travel, our trainers bring the training directly to you at no cost.
- 3 Learn from qualified trainers who have trained 2,000+ clinic staff.
- 4 Learn and grow together as an agency.
- 5 Information is personalized to each agency using responses generated from a staff engagement survey.
- 6 Receive staff and participant materials that are exclusive to trained agencies.
- 7 Continued support from trainers in the form of email tips and invitations to take part in state-wide networking calls.
- 8 Training opportunities are available for a limited time only and our training calendar fills up fast!
- 9 Satisfy your curiosity by getting in on what others are talking about...what've you got to lose?
- 10 Lastly, we'd love nothing more than to help get your agency started down the path to influence.

To sign up to receive the POI training at your agency or for more information, please contact Kelley Reed, Nutrition Education Consultant, at 512-341-4580 or kelley.reed@dshs.state.tx.us.



Top photo: LA 20, Regence Health Network staff working together on a team building activity. Above: LA 10, Grayson County proudly presenting their final group project.

New Name, New Focus —

Food Issuance and Redemption Services Changes Its Name to Vendor Management & Operations Unit

TEXAS WIC VMO

VENDOR MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS UNIT

by Heather Claybrook
Team Lead, Analytics & Unit Support
Vendor Management & Operations Unit

What's in a name? Everything when you are the premier offline Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program for WIC in the country. The unit formerly known as Food Issuance and Redemption Services (FIRS) has changed its name to Vendor Management and Operations (VMO) unit, effective July 1, 2015. The name change reflects the unit's business function and services, and will assist in the expansion of its services and activities in the following areas: EBT operations, compliance oversight, vendor outreach, and analytics and unit support. Magdalena Blanco, VMO unit director says, "Even though we have changed our name, the service, support, and long term commitment remains unchanged. We are very excited about this branding opportunity and look forward to continued growth and improvement."

With the new name, VMO is changing the conversation with a better alignment. Many of the WIC staff have been a part of the program since the start of the EBT system, so management is able to tap into years of knowledge to move VMO forward. For staff, this means an opportunity to grow their skill set to better support the team. "The name change allows staff to re-introduce their teams and the services they perform for WIC. This has given them a new found ownership in their part of the vendor management process," says Denisha Cox, VMO Compliance Oversight manager.



Magdalena Blanco



Denisha Cox

The new alignment also reflects a shift in focus to adapt to changing times in the EBT industry to support continued growth. VMO is still the same group; however, changing the framework for all of our stakeholders

allows the Texas WIC program to stay on top as a leader in the country. Texas WIC rolled out the EBT program in April 2009 and was the first state to evolve from a paper voucher system to the offline EBT card. Since then, Texas has been the “go-to state” that others lean on for expertise as those states have moved to an EBT system. Grocery store managers indicated the use of EBT resulted in faster and simpler transactions for cashiers and participants and faster reimbursements for the stores.

The name change not only allows the unit to be current but also better connected with vendors. Many WIC programs in other states use the name *Vendor Management and Operations* so it makes sense, when talking with grocers, to utilize terminology in which they are familiar. Since those states look to the state of Texas for guidance as they move to the EBT system, it’s important to stay relevant. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the WIC program, has mandated that all states utilize an EBT system by the year 2020. The fast approaching deadline means there are more stakeholders involved so terminology is more important now than ever before.

Texas WIC is also looking to capitalize on the latest advances in technology to remain at the forefront. New Mexico, Louisiana, Pueblo of Is-

leta, and Cherokee Nation are also collaborating with Texas to utilize the latest software systems available. This will allow our EBT system to be more automated. Another automated feature is online vendor training which will provide more access for vendors to ensure they fulfill the required training under our program guidelines. With this new branding, the Vendor Outreach branch is also exploring the use of a mobile app for smart phones to enhance the shopping experience for WIC vendors and clients.

While a mobile app is still in the works, it will ultimately help improve the lives of WIC clients and give them better value as they participate in the program. Value is something clients speak about when they talk about their experience with the Texas WIC program. Just ask, Nastashia Savoie, a former WIC participant. The Arlington resident says the WIC program was there for her four years ago, during a critical point in her life. “After my daughter was born, I was really lost in how to take care of my child. The WIC program helped me so much. Not only did they help me with learning how to breastfeed but with nutritional guidance as well.”



Nastashia Savoie

Texas serves an estimated 900,000 clients monthly. The Vendor Outreach branch of the VMO unit continues to make improvements to our customer service activities. So if a WIC participant has an unusual shopping experience, you can reach out and call our Vendor Hotline at 1-512-341-4425, or 1-800-252-9629 (Texas only), or email at WICVendorRelations@dshs.texas.gov.

From First Heartbeats to First Steps: Preconception and Newborn Continuing Education Courses

by Leticia Liamero
Texas Health Steps

Texas Health Steps Online Provider Education (OPE) offers free continuing education courses and tutorials on best practices and preventive measures for preconception, birth, and beyond, including:

- ▶ Infant Safe Sleep
- ▶ Nutrition
- ▶ Breastfeeding
- ▶ Immunization
- ▶ Newborn Screening
- ▶ Management of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents
- ▶ Reducing Non-Medically Necessary Deliveries Before 39 Weeks
- ▶ Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding: Birth Practices that Support Breastfeeding
- ▶ Preconception and Prenatal Health

OPE is working on two projects that may be of particular interest to WIC staff. The first is a video series entitled, *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*.

How this course supports WIC professionals:

- Serves as a valuable resource that can be shared with healthcare professionals at local hospitals to promote and support breastfeeding.
- Offers free continuing education credit.

There's more

This self-paced video series supports professional development of WIC staff and provides a detailed overview of the World Health Organization/UNICEF [Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding](#). This video series offers free continuing education credit for nurses, social workers, and certified health education specialists. And of course, an omnipresent and long-term goal for Julie Stagg, state breastfeeding coordinator and women's and perinatal health nurse consultant, is to promote these resources to local hospitals and healthcare professionals to encourage uptake of recommended practices so that mothers are better supported to meet their infant feeding goals.

What to say to healthcare professionals at local hospitals about this video series:

This course promotes early and exclusive breastfeeding and provides support to implement the [Ten Steps](#), an evidence-based bundle of recommended maternity care practices for lactating mothers and their babies. Birthing facilities working toward these practice improvements can be supported and recognized through the [Texas 10 Step Program](#). Facilities that have fully integrated these practices may be eligible for recognition through Baby-Friendly USA.

Let's work together towards this common goal

In taking this course, WIC professionals will expand their knowledge on recommended practices in hospitals and birthing centers that



help mothers get off to the best start with infant feeding, including birthing and labor practices, supporting mothers and babies with contraindications and special needs, counseling and communicating with mothers about breastfeeding, and proper formula preparation for mothers who choose not to breastfeed.

Thank you!

Collaboration was key to the success of this project. Many thanks to the DSHS Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section for funding the project and the development team including:

- Lissie Hagerman, OPE lead planner
- Christina Thi, obesity prevention coordinator
- Tracy Erickson, Texas WIC breastfeeding coordinator
- Julie Stagg, state breastfeeding coordinator and women's and perinatal health nurse consultant
- Veronica Hendrix, training specialist
- Anita Wheeler, CE nurse planner

This video series compliments our current [Breastfeeding](#) module which are both available on www.txhealthsteps.com.

Preconception and prenatal health care

The second project that may be of interest to WIC professionals is our suite of *Preconception and Prenatal Health* modules.

What do we know about preconception and prenatal health care?

Women of childbearing age encounter many health conditions and risk factors that affect their current and long-term health and, if they become pregnant, the health of their infants. The goal of preconception health care is to address those health conditions and risks at every primary care encounter, using evidence-based strategies and resources, regardless of whether a woman plans to get pregnant.

The goal of prenatal health care is to address these health conditions and risk factors at every clinical encounter during pregnancy. The two are related: preconception health care prepares women for healthier lives and pregnancies, if and when they occur. This is made more important by the fact that nearly one-half of pregnancies are unintended; therefore, preconception care should be considered an

integral part of primary care for women of reproductive age.

The overview module, *Preconception and Prenatal Health-Overview*, introduces providers to current best practices in preconception and prenatal health care. The information focuses on women from 18 years through 44 years, who represent the majority of live births. Younger women also are included because of the high teen birth rate in Texas and the importance of promoting good health habits in young people.

Look for these other modules to be released in conjunction with the *Preconception and Prenatal Health Overview*:

- *Managing Chronic Issues Before and During Pregnancy*
- *Identifying and Intervening in Risky Behaviors that Affect Maternal and Infant Health*
- *Identifying and Preventing Cytomegalovirus Infection*
- *Promoting and Maintaining Maternal Oral Health*

Texas Health Steps Online Provider Education

Online Provider Education offers more than 50 free continuing education courses and tutorials designed to enhance health-care providers' ability to deliver preventive medical, oral, and behavioral health care to children and adolescents enrolled in Medicaid. OPE supports the [Texas Health Steps](#) Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program by developing and expanding a qualified provider network that is knowledgeable, proficient, and well-versed in Medicaid policy and check-up requirements.

Online Provider Education also offers [educational videos](#), [case studies](#), [course-specific resources](#), and patient education materials for providers to use in their clinical practices.

Check out www.txhealthsteps.com to see what is new.





Hellen Sullivan Scholarship Fund Applications Due February 14

by Kristina Arrieta, MPH, IBCLC
Peer Counselor Coordinator
and Missy Hammer
Continuing Education Coordinator

The Hellen Sullivan Scholarship is named after a dearly loved WIC state employee who passed away on March 5, 2013, after a 7-year-battle with cancer. Hellen was an RN, IBCLC, whose official WIC title was Breastfeeding Trainer. But to all who knew her she was so much more!



Her wit and sense of humor combined with her vast breastfeeding knowledge was legendary and appreciated by everyone. It didn't matter how many times you went to one of her trainings; you were always engaged and you always learned something new. During her 13 years of breastfeeding education she was involved in the training of over 40,000 health care professionals including physicians, nurses, and dietitians as well as WIC staff. She was instrumental in the development and design of many of the Texas WIC breastfeeding classes presented including the Principles of Lactation Management, Lactation Counseling and Problem Solving, and Breastfeeding Management, just to name a few.



In addition to her devotion to breastfeeding, Hellen was deeply involved in her church and community.

Hellen left a lasting impression on the WIC program at the local, state, and national levels. Her absence is deeply felt by her family, friends, and co-workers. In Hellen's memory, a scholarship has been created.



The Hellen Sullivan Scholarship Fund is sponsored by the Texas Breastfeeding Coalition (TXBC) and the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors (TALWD). It is designed to cover the cost of the IBLCE exam or conference registration fee to meet IBLCE continuing education requirements. Applicants must be a TXBC member to apply for the annual scholarship. The deadline to apply is February 14, 2016. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://texasbreastfeedingcoalition.org/hellen-sullivan-scholarship-fund/>

The Truth in the Science: The Pros and Cons of Genetically Modified Foods

CONTRIBUTED BY NATALIE EBROM, TEXAS STATE DIETETIC INTERN

Without realizing it, you've probably had a food that's been genetically altered by science. Currently, up to 88 percent of U.S. corn is genetically modified, as are 94 percent of soybeans and 90 percent of cotton, whose oil is often used in food products like mayonnaise and salad dressing. It has been estimated that upwards of 75 percent of processed foods on supermarket shelves, including soda, soups, crackers, and condiments, contain genetically engineered ingredients.

Genetically modified foods, sometimes called "bioengineered" foods or "GMO" foods, are foods that have had their genetic structure changed to give them specific desired traits, like resistance to drought. Some of the most common genetically modified (GM) foods include soybeans, corn, cotton, sugar beet, canola, squash, papaya, alfalfa or their derivatives (soy oil, soy flour, soy protein isolates, corn oil, corn starch, corn flour, canola oil, cottonseed oil, and high fructose corn syrup).

The World Health Organization, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Medical Association all say these crops are at least as safe as, and often safer than, foods changed the old-fashioned way, such as when a new plant is bred from two different types. However, certain public interest groups and religious organizations proclaim harmful effects of consuming GM foods, pointing to a handful of studies to support their premise. These opponents hold that GM foods can cause serious problems if ingested.

Potential Benefits

- **More food:** GM crops can be produced to survive through drought, flood, frost, and disease. The development of crops that can be grown in less desirable conditions has helped ease world hunger and allowed farmers the capability to meet the agriculture and food needs of future generations.
- **Less stress on the environment:** Crops built to resist pests lower farmers' need for toxic chemical pesticides. They also require less soil to be tilled, reduce runoff, and keep the soil in place. One of the major unanticipated benefits has been a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, equivalent to taking 22 million cars off the roads.
- **Better products:** GM foods allow for improvements in color, flavor, and nutritive value. GM foods can be designed to include desirable traits, such as potatoes that absorb less fat when fried or soybeans with heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids.



(continued on WWW — Insert D)

Stress Management: Changing Your Perspective

CONTRIBUTED BY ALLISON PORTER, DIETETIC INTERN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

We may not always be able to control what happens in our day-to-day lives, but one thing we can control is our perspective. Being mindful of your perspective is one of the best ways to minimize stress. If you think about it, the things that stress you out probably aren't your circumstances themselves, but the thoughts and emotions surrounding those circumstances. Finding healthy and effective ways of handling the problems life throws at us leads to an overall improvement in our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. There is always a positive spin you can put on a difficult situation.

There are numerous benefits of maintaining a positive mental perspective, varying from physical effects like improved immune function to psychological effects like increased creativity and problem-solving skills. Staying positive in the midst of adversity isn't easy, but it is possible to acknowledge our challenges without letting them overwhelm our state of mind. Curtailing negative thoughts and emotions will improve health status as well as overall quality of life. Here are some strategies to help you reshape your perspective in the midst of everyday life:

- **Mental conversation:** Be mindful of your own self-talk. It's easy to be unreasonably hard on ourselves. If you notice you're talking down to yourself, switch gears and talk yourself up for a change.
- **Talk therapy:** Whether it's with a professional counselor or just a good friend, saying your problems out loud and getting them off your chest

really helps put things into perspective. Just be sure that whoever you vent to is not personally involved in the subject at hand.

- **Stretching and exercise:** Focusing on your physical body, how it feels, and what it's capable of can take your mind off all the other issues floating around in your head. Exercise also has positive physiological effects on mood.
- **Know the difference:** Recognize which aspects of your life are within your control and which aren't. If there's something you can do to improve your situation, do it! If there isn't, then worrying about it won't change anything, so let it go and focus your energy on something you can impact.
- **Positive journaling:** Instead of writing down everything that happens to you, try writing down three things every day that you feel proud of or positive about. It could be something nice you did for someone else or something you are grateful for. The subject doesn't matter as much as how it makes you feel.
- **Laugh it off:** Finding humor in things that might normally be viewed as negative can provide a sense of emotional relief. You can make a joke about almost anything. Just don't make it at someone else's expense.
- **Choose friends wisely:** It's hard enough to maintain a positive outlook on your own. Spending time with negative people just makes it that much harder. Surround yourself with people who uplift you and make you feel good. You owe it to yourself!

Resources

- Grossman P, Neimann L, Schmidt S, Walach H. Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *J Psychosom Res.* 2004;57(1): 35-43.
- Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950?pg=2>. Updated March 4, 2014. Accessed November 3, 2015.
- Taylor & Francis. Positive health technique for stressed nurses found. ScienceDaily Web site. Available from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/03/140303103746.htm. Updated March 3, 2014. Accessed November 3, 2015.

Texas Seasonal Produce



Fruits:
Grapefruit,
oranges

Vegetables:

Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots,
cauliflower, celery, greens, herbs,
mushrooms, kale, kohlrabi, spinach,
sweet potatoes, greenhouse
tomatoes, turnips

recipe

Crockpot Chicken “No-Tortilla” Soup

Modified from Williams Sonoma *The New Slow Cooker Recipe*

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz.) no salt added diced tomatoes
- 1 medium sweet yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 jalapeno chilies, seeded and chopped
- 5½ cups (44 fluid oz.) low sodium chicken stock (divided)
- 2 pounds chicken breasts
- 3 limes
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 3 large bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- 2½ cups (15 oz.) yellow corn kernels (or about 4 ears of corn)
- 2 small avocados, diced
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped

Preparation

1. In a blender or food processor, add the canned tomatoes, onion, garlic, jalapenos, 1 cup of the stock, and blend until smooth. Pour into a slow cooker.
2. Add the chicken breasts, the remaining 4½ cups stock, the juice of 1 lime, vinegar, cumin, bay leaves, ½ teaspoon salt, and pepper to taste. Cover and cook on low for 4 hours. Check the chicken and cook longer if center of chicken breasts are still pink.
3. Transfer the chicken breasts to a plate and shred. Return the chicken to the slow cooker. Add the corn kernels, cover, and cook on low 30 minutes more. Remove and discard bay leaves.
4. Cut the remaining 2 limes into wedges. Ladle the soup into bowls, distributing all the ingredients. Top with avocado and cilantro and a squeeze of fresh lime.

Nutrition Information per Serving:

270 calories, 13 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 15 mg cholesterol, 180 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrate (9 g dietary fiber, 4 g sugar), 15 g protein



The Truth in the Science

(continued from page WWW — Insert A)

Possible Risks

- **The rise of super weeds:** Opponents of GM food fear crops built to withstand herbicides, or weed killers, could breed with each other and transfer their genes to weeds thus creating indestructible “super weeds.”
- **Health problems:** Genetic modification often mixes or adds proteins that don’t exist in the original plant. GM foes fear these will create new allergic reactions. For example, if someone is allergic to peanuts, how can they know that a gene from a peanut was not added to another food they are eating? To date the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) has found no differences in allergenicity to proteins from GM plants.
- **Long term fears:** Food and food ingredients from GM plants were introduced into our food supply in the 1990s. While several hundred studies collected over this time support the safety of GM foods, opponents say the handful of animal studies that show bad long term effects on animals, like harm to the kidneys, liver, heart, or other organs, should carry more weight.

The Right to Know

In the United States, manufacturers are not required to list whether or not their product was genetically modified unless there is a compositional difference between them and their conventional counterpart. For example, if rice was changed to make it more nutritious, the manufacturer would have to list that on the label. The National Organic Program (NOP) does not certify foods as organic if they are genetically modified. If you choose to completely avoid GM foods, your best bet is to eat foods that are certified organic or those bearing the Non-GMO Project Verified Seal.



If you choose to completely avoid genetically modified foods, look for those bearing the Non-GMO Project Verified Seal.

- Non-GMO Project. Agricultural crops that have a risk of being GMO. Non-GMO Project Web site. <http://www.nongmoproject.org/learn-more/what-is-gmo>. Accessed November 3, 2015.
- Institute of Food Technologists. Science meets food. What you need to know about GMOs, GM crops, and the techniques of modern biotechnology. Institute of Food Technologists Web site. <http://sciencemeetsfood.org/need-know-gmos-gm-crops-techniques-modern-biotechnology>. Updated January 21, 2014. Accessed November 3, 2015.
- Food from genetically engineered plants. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Web site. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/Biotechnology/ucm346030.htm>. Updated October 21, 2015. Accessed November 3, 2015.
- World Health Organization. Food safety: Frequently asked questions on genetically modified foods. World Health Organization Web site. http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/food-technology/faq-genetically-modified-food/en. Accessed November 3, 2015.

Share your wellness success stories for a chance to be spotlighted in Texas WIC News and inspire other WIC staff! Contact your State Wellness Coordinator, Debbie Lehman, at Debbie.Lehman@dshs.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4517.

Bacteria - The Good Guys

by Mandy Seay, RD, LD, CDE
Clinic Services Training Coordinator

As someone who works at WIC you probably regularly think about killing “bad” bacteria with hand washing and proper cooking temps and techniques. But how often do you talk about the “good” bacteria?

Several hundreds of types of bacteria are found in and on our body, and according to the National Institutes of Health, the helpful ones make up about one to three percent of the body's weight. That equals several pounds!

Healthy Guts

The good bacteria in the intestines play a particularly important role in health. Besides keeping the “bad guys” at bay, they help break down many of the things in our diet so that we can absorb them; produce vitamins and anti-inflammatory chemicals that we cannot make on our own; and help reduce certain disorders associated with the gut.

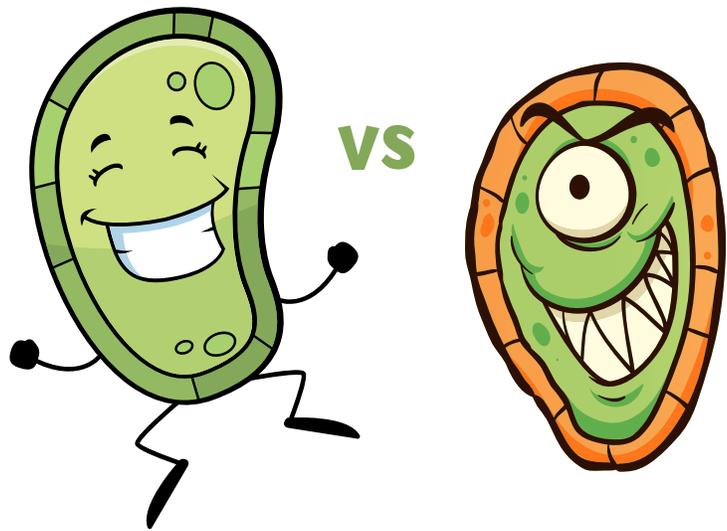
Pro/Pre

Probiotics, also known as the “good guys,” are healthy live bacteria. Making your gut healthier is easy. Just look for labels that state “live and active cultures” on kefir, yogurt, miso, tempeh, sauerkraut, and other fermented foods.

Prebiotics are non-digestible food ingredients that stimulate the growth and or activity of the good bacteria. A few examples include whole grains, bananas, onions, garlic, and artichokes.

Mothers and Breastfeeding

Christophe Lacroix, of the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health said, “A healthy community of bacteria in the gut of both mother and baby is really important for baby’s gut health and immune system development.” A research study published in *Environmental Microbiology* in August 2013 discovered that the same strains of bacteria found in mom’s gut were being transferred to the baby through breastmilk.



Additionally, breastfed infants carry a type of beneficial bacteria known as bifidobacteria in their colon. A prebiotic found in breastmilk helps this bacterium thrive. Infants who are exclusively breastfed are estimated to receive 10 times the amount of bifidobacteria than infants who are formula fed.

Food Safety Innovations

Several governmental agencies and research centers are working to develop ways to use helpful bacteria to prevent Salmonella and Campylobacter (harmful bacteria) commonly found in the GI tract of poultry. Some methods include spraying newborn chicks with beneficial bacteria or using a “Mucosal Starter Culture.” Some commercial producers have experimented, but safety has been a concern when some of the bacteria strains were unidentified. Annie Donoghue, a poultry physiologist and research leader at the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service Poultry Production and Product Safety Research Unit explains, “The biggest challenge is determining the correct types and quantity of probiotics because of the numbers and diversity of microbes and the poorly understood interactions between the microbes and the intestine.”

Future of Dietary Guidelines?

Scientists from International Scientific Probiotics and Prebiotics propose that the 2015 Dietary Guidelines include live microbes and probiotics as part of a healthy diet and suggest they include “...foods rich in prebiotic carbohydrates, such as banana, onion, chicory, artichoke, asparagus, leek and garlic, as a part of a healthy, American diet.”

Local Agencies: Planning for the New Year

Local Agency 31

Local Agency 31 is committed next year and beyond to “Make Happiness A Habit.” So much of our own attitudes, body language, and way we interact with others around us is a reflection of our own happiness or perception of what happiness should be. Our local agency is no different than many other work places in which we are challenged with keeping the team work, motivation, and momentum high at all times. We had the opportunity to hear about the *Power of Influence* training at the recent NBF Conference in Austin and knew right away it was something that could positively impact our clinic atmosphere. We have signed up for the next training but have already begun developing positive changes now.



Our agency has begun a year-long “Make Happiness A Habit” challenge. In our monthly staff newsletters we will provide helpful information and a daily challenge for staff that will make their work or day more enjoyable. Small changes like smiling at others, making friends at work, avoiding negativity, and asking someone how they are doing can all go a long way. They are such small changes sometimes, but if we don’t do them, they unconsciously affect our attitudes, assumptions, and eventually our happiness. If we are not happy at work, our clients and others around us notice. Happiness is definitely a choice and while we cannot control everything that happens during the day, we can control our outlooks.

We hope that over the next several months and through the *Power of Influence* training we will see the life of the clinic begin to change and grow. One of the quotes we shared with staff recently was, “Your mind is a powerful thing. When you begin to fill it with positive thoughts, your life will start to change.” We are looking forward to many exciting and positive developments in 2016 and making happiness a habit at LA 31. CONTRIBUTED BY NIKKI MORROW, IBCLC, ASSISTANT WIC DIRECTOR, NUTRITION EDUCATION COORDINATOR, BELL COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

Local Agency 76

"One of our Nutrition Education plans is to have children’s classes in the community each quarter. Staff will go to daycares or Head Start or wherever there is an audience of 3- to 5-year-olds. Our *Superheroes* theme was so popular in 2015 that our theme for 2016 is *Superheroes Ride Again*. These are the class topics:

Fall: WIC Superheroes Meet My Plate featuring Awesome Apple

Winter: Mighty Milk

Spring: Captain Carrot

Summer: Wonder Bread

CONTRIBUTED BY RITA DAVIDSON,
WIC DIRECTOR, LA 76



Left photo: Children participating in class. Above: Whitney McDonald, WIC assistant director for LA76 teaching with puppet, Willow, in Marble Falls.

Local Agency 01

"We LOVE nutrition education"

Something Diana Flores, WIC nutritionist, learned from the NBF Conference: "I found *Baby Led Weaning* really interesting. It was surprising to see how a baby can eat an entire slice of melon or a chicken leg by herself and start developing the skill of eating at such a young age."

The conference's closing keynote address was inspiring. "Dr. Adolph Brown's *Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover*. He is such a motivator and I think he inspired everyone in the audience," said Flores.

When asked what idea would you like to see the agency implement, Flores responded, "I would like the idea of having *The Power Of Influence Training* for all new staff so we can start implementing this new way of working for our clients with an entirely different vision." CONTRIBUTED BY DIANA FLORES, WIC NUTRITIONIST

"After attending the NBF conference, our staff here at the St. John WIC clinic were inspired by the Happiness presentation. We created a Happiness board to spread our joy to the clients and to each other. The board is posted in our classroom so that we can be reminded of happiness in times of stress. We've also invited our clients to share their joy as well. After one week of starting this, we had one client post her message on our board. This is a small, doable, and meaningful team project. Our hope is to connect with our clients, be reminded of joy, and to influence each other to be happy each and every day." CONTRIBUTED BY KATLYN LE, MPA, RD, LD, SENIOR NUTRITIONIST

Plans for 2016 include being "... proactive, 'PHABulous' and the finest trained agency in the state." CONTRIBUTED BY SHEREE L. SCUDDER, MA, RDN, CLE, WIC TRAINING COORDINATOR

"After hearing the Austin Botanical Council (ABC) presentation, at this year's NBF Conference, Local Agency 01 Austin-Travis County contacted ABC who agreed to create a *WIC Herbal Wellness* class for WIC nutritionists. The class will focus on fundamentals of herbal medicine with an evidence-based focus and include a tour of the ABC herbal gardens, and a hands-on activity. Also in the works are Food as Medicine and Garden Apothecary presentations from Texas State University Dietetic students and UT Pharmacy Interns to WIC Nutritionists as an educational effort." CONTRIBUTED BY YVONNE MARTINEZ, RD, LD, WIC NUTRITION EDUCATION COORDINATOR, AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



Diana Flores



Happiness board

Local Agency 107

Our LA Goals for 2016 include finding more ways to retain clients on the WIC program until all children turn 5 years old; to reach as many potential eligible clients (concentrating in rural areas); decreasing our no-show rates; and continuing to stress the benefits of breastfeeding to increase our breastfeeding rates. CONTRIBUTED BY PAULA SNOKHOUS, WIC DIRECTOR, RN PA-C, LA 107

Awards of Excellence

by Kristina Arrieta, MPH, IBCLC
Peer Counselor Coordinator

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) developed the Loving Support Award of Excellence program. The award program was established to recognize local WIC agencies that have provided exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support activities.

The intent is to provide models and motivate other local agencies to strengthen their breastfeeding promotion and support activities and ultimately increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants.

The state of Texas is proud to announce that three Texas local agencies earned the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service's Loving Support Award of Excellence — Gold. This award is in recognition of successful breastfeeding performance measures, effective peer counseling programs, and strong community partnerships.

- City of Dallas, Local Agency 7
- Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Local Agency 32
- Hidalgo County, Local Agency 12

This is great recognition for staff's efforts in addressing societal barriers, enhancing the peer counselor program, building key coalitions, and more. They are the cheerleaders for our mothers and are changing the culture in their community to make breastfeeding the norm.

All WIC agencies utilizing the [USDA Loving Support Model](#) for a successful peer counseling program

were eligible to apply for the honor, which considers their breastfeeding performance measures, effective peer counseling programs, and community partnerships. A total of 55 local WIC agencies across the country qualified for an award. By recognizing their success and sharing best practices, the WIC Loving Support Awards of



Left LA32, from left to right: Hitesh Bakshi, Nathana Villar, Kaitlyn Doerner, and Violeta Reyna.

Excellence will provide successful models and motivation to other WIC local agencies with the goal of ultimately increasing breastfeeding rates among WIC participants.

This is the first year the Loving Support Award of Excellence is being presented across the

country to help recognize and celebrate exemplary breastfeeding programs. We encourage all agencies to incorporate the recommended practices to meet these gold standards of excellence into your current peer counselor program. We hope to have even more of our local agencies receive this award in the future.



Above LA 07, from left to right: Darrell Allen, Hitesh Bakshi, Deborah Parnell, Eddie Longoria, Darlene Irwin, Karen Rayzer, Maria Magallanes, and Christine Wiseman.



Above LA 12, from left to right: Nadia Garza, Veronica Rodriguez, Diana Cardona, Burlene Carrizalez, Linda Zeccola, Tracy Erickson, Norma Longoria, and Georgina Tober.

What's New at Mom's Place: Answering the Call

by Linda Zeccola, RN, IBCLC
Breastfeeding Training Specialist

The 2011 Surgeon General's call to action to support breastfeeding recommended that we "...take on a commitment to enable mothers to meet their personal goals." Even though breastfeeding rates have improved, "...disparities in breastfeeding have persisted by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic characteristics, and geography."

Mom's Place, a Lactation Support Center in Austin, has been helping moms succeed with breastfeeding since 1994. Women with complicated situations or in need of more in-depth support can get expert assistance with breastfeeding concerns. Mothers have a variety of concerns including sore nipples, engorgement, a baby who won't latch, milk supply, a slow-gaining baby, or a preterm infant. With timely help, women are able to fulfill their goals and breastfeed for a longer duration. Mom's Place is a diverse clinic, employing two RN/ IBCLCs, as well as other IBCLCs and breastfeeding peer counselors, including bilingual staff. The client gets the time and focused attention needed to resolve concerns and can leave the clinic feeling less overwhelmed.

Meet some of the staff:

As a WIC participant, **Virginia Rendon** really liked the breastfeeding class she attended. She spoke with the breastfeeding peer counselor after the class, who recommended that she attend the training for peer counselors. At the time, it was only the second class given in Austin. Virginia began working at the Rosewood clinic in 1991. She has loved being at Mom's Place the last 14 years, helping moms breastfeed. Virginia enjoys the challenge of all the different moms and situations, and tries to do the best she can for each mother and baby.

Drasha Cravin struggled with breastfeeding her first child, and persevered. Riding a bus every day, she learned a lot watching another woman breastfeed. At St. John's Clinic in Austin, Amanda Hovis, who was a nutritionist at that time, encouraged Drasha to take the breastfeeding peer counselor training. Later she took the exam to be an IBCLC. Now Drasha has been working for WIC for 15 years. Drasha says she can't wait to get to work every day to help moms.

Schantalyn-Danielle Jacobs came to Austin from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. She had been on WIC in Louisiana, and transferred to WIC in Round Rock. Not long after, she



Top photo: Virginia Rendon. Below: Drasha Cravin helping a mom and infant.



became a breastfeeding peer counselor. Schantalyn has a BS in Public Health Administration, and is also certified to teach K-12. She knew she could be a lactation consultant, and earned her IBCLC in 2011. Schantalyn is a new addition to Mom's Place and is happy to be there; she loves a challenge. She puts moms at ease so they can learn, while involving the father, grandmothers, and siblings. Schantalyn says, "You need to be consistent, persistent, and insistent."

Terri Gebhart, RN, IBCLC, became convinced that she wanted to help mothers with breastfeeding after she took the Texas WIC class, "Breastfeeding Management." While working in an Austin hospital newborn nursery, Terri decided to take newborns out to the recovery room to be with moms for skin-to-skin and latch after a C-Section. Terri became a mentor for the rest of the staff, and other nurses started doing the same. That led her to want to be board certified as a lactation consultant. She is thrilled to get the opportunity to work at Mom's Place.

Aphrica Farrow, a breastfeeding peer counselor, is the newest member of the Mom's Place team. Aphrica says that her mom encouraged her to breastfeed when she was pregnant with her first child. That support was very important, and she was able to go on to successfully breastfeed three other daughters. When Aphrica was pregnant with her last child, she talked to the peer counselor at her WIC clinic and asked her how she could also become a peer counselor, because she really enjoyed the interaction they had. Aphrica then applied and got a job at the St. John's WIC clinic. She loves seeing moms feel empowered by breastfeeding success and the relief women feel when they overcome difficulties.

Call Mom's Place at 1-512-972-6700 or visit their website at www.momsplace.org for more information or help.



Top photo: Schantalyn-Danielle Jacobs. Above: Terri Gebhart. Below: Aphrica Farrow.



Group photo above: back row left to right: Virginia Rendon, Silvana Ortigoza, Aphrica Farrow, Angela Fritsch, Terri Gebhart, Drasha Cravin, and Kirsy Traweek. Front row, left to right: Donna Sundstrom, Susan Glaeser, and Schantalyn-Danielle Jacobs

How to Avoid Becoming **Hangry**

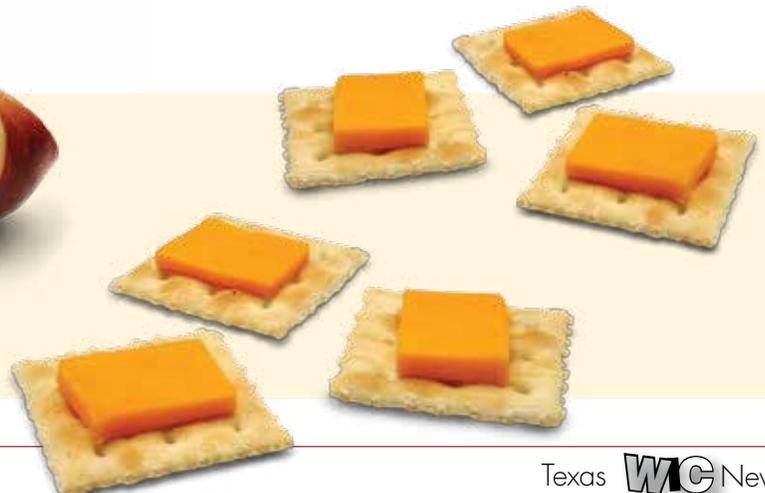
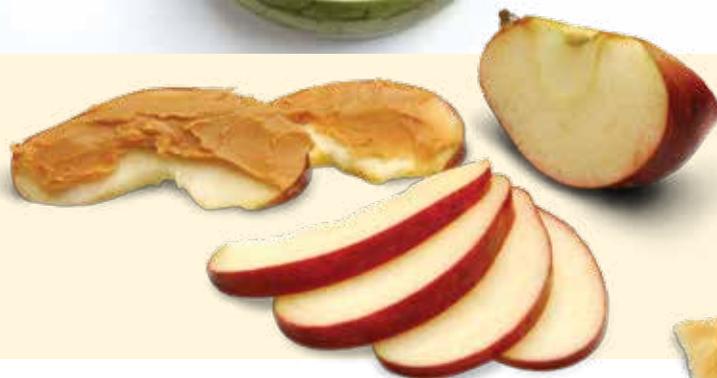
Mrs. Always B. Wright, MS, IBCLC

Hi there! Mrs. Always B Wright here filling in for the mister. Eaton is off enjoying the National Steak Knife Convention. I opted to stay home — can you blame me?

Ever heard of the term “hangry?” Well my husband knows exactly when I’ve reached the state of hangry. Hangry is formally defined as a state of being so hungry that you become angry. If I am irritable, he will ask if I need a snack. The struggle is real. As you pursue the new you this year, how can you become a better version of yourself without attempting diets that will cause you to become hangry?

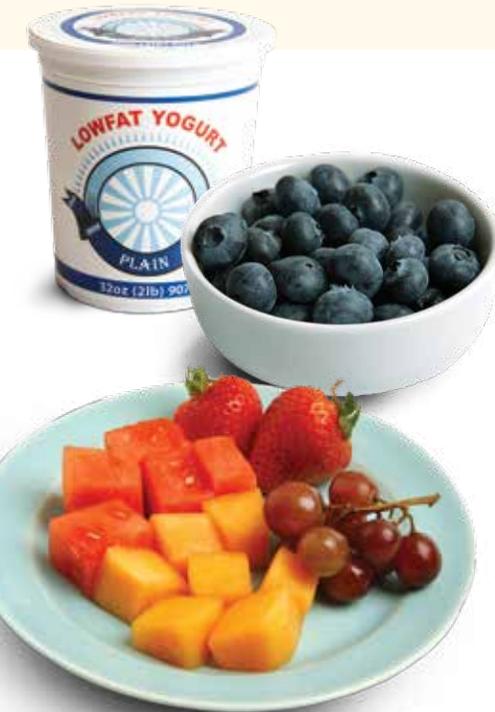
Unfortunately, most popular fad diets ask you to do unreasonable things. Eliminate all carbohydrates, don’t eat any sugar, only eat things that the cavewoman would eat, or drink a juice for 7 days that will ruin your bowel movements for 14 days. While many of these diets promise weight loss, and many do actually cause you to lose weight, they aren’t sustainable — at least for normal people. Imagine trying to maintain a social life while balancing a demanding diet, or even attending a work holiday party and having to explain to everyone why you aren’t partaking. It’s hard!

So let’s first talk about the realities of a demanding diet and how they affect your body and your mood. Each fad diet is a little different in its approach. Some will eliminate a food group all together and others will cut calories so drastically that they don’t allow you to workout. A diet that doesn’t allow for physical activity? That’s a red flag. Your body needs energy to survive, keep your brain at full-power, and for activity. Most of the energy your body uses is in the form of sugar (or glucose). When your body is low in sugar it is hard to function. Did you know that one of the signs of low blood sugar is irritability and fatigue? Sounds like hangry to me!



For those of us wanting to improve our health, whether it is losing weight, building muscle tone, or simply making healthier choices, how do we avoid the hangry but still meet our goal? Here are some tips:

- Avoid any diet claiming quick weight loss. Because with quick weight loss comes quick weight gain.
- Instead, focus on one to two lifestyle changes and add them to your routine. Each month you can continue to add things like drinking more water, eating more vegetables, and walking in the evenings.
- Watch the self-talk. We are our harshest critics. You are doing a great job. And if you aren't perfect that just means you are human. Perfection is an illusion. In the words of Ann Hathaway "I gave up my struggle with perfection a long time ago. That is a concept I don't find interesting anymore."
- Have a healthy snack every couple hours. You work long hours and it is easy to get caught in the hustle and bustle. Whole wheat crackers, fruit, vegetables, yogurt, or a cheese stick can be a quick way to get your body the energy it needs to run.
- Share these tips with your coworkers, you know, the ones who also get hangry...



Pop Quiz

Which is the best option to avoid becoming hangry:

- Don't eat carbohydrates ever, they make you fat.
- Ignore early signs. Your body will eventually get used to it.
- Keep healthy snacks at your desk to munch on when you have a break from saving the world, one WIC client at a time.
- Find other people who seem more hangry than you to hang around.

The answer is C. Don't wait too long to give your body fuel. Keep some snacks within arm's reach and you'll be happier. Your coworkers will thank you!

About the author: Mrs. Always B is a lactation consultant, mother, chef, personal shopper, and wife to Eaton Wright, a certified NUT based in Austin, Texas.

Resources

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