POLICY: Providing Therapeutic WIC Formulas and Foods during COVID-19

1. The Competent Professional Authority (CPA) must assess a WIC participant’s nutritional needs and determine an appropriate WIC food package.
   - See Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods for more information.

2. Staff must assess the likelihood of a qualifying medical diagnosis listed on the WIC Medical Documentation Form before providing the form to participants or caregivers, or having the WIC Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (WIC RDN) complete the form with a recommended food prescription.
   
   **Note:** Symptoms aren’t acceptable as qualifying medical diagnoses for WIC. Symptoms include colic, constipation, vomiting, spitting up, rash, fussiness, picky eating, or food or formula refusal.

3. A WIC Medical Documentation Form must be completed and signed by a medical provider with prescriptive authority or staff must receive verbal orders from the medical provider.
   - There are separate forms for Infants (Birth to 12 months), Children 1-5 years, and Women.
   - Staff may print these forms from the Washington State WIC Program website at: http://www.doh.wa.gov/wicformula.

4. The WIC Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (WIC RDN) may complete the form with a recommended prescription when the medical provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.
   - In this situation, staff send the form to the medical provider to approve or update the form as needed, sign it and return it to the clinic.
   - Staff may issue benefits for the 30-day grace period while waiting to hear back from the medical provider.
     
     **Note:** If the RDN determines the participant needs PediaSure, staff may issue it during the grace period while getting confirmation from the medical provider.
   - Staff must contact the medical provider if they don’t have a response within 30 days. Medical documentation may be provided in a variety of forms, including electronically and by phone.
5. A **WIC Medical Documentation Form** must be completed each time:

- There’s a new request for a therapeutic WIC formula and/or food based on medical need.
- A **WIC Medical Documentation Form** expires and there’s still a medical need to continue the formula and/or foods.
- An infant with current medical documentation reaches the first birthday and there’s still a medical need for the formula and/or foods.
- A participant’s category changes (to pregnant, breastfeeding or non-breastfeeding postpartum) and there’s still a medical need for the formula and/or foods.

**Note:** Participants transferring in with current medical documentation don’t need an updated form until the documentation expires.

6. Staff can provide a grace period for formula when: (See “Grace Periods for Therapeutic Formulas” in *Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods*.)

- A participant or caregiver requests a therapeutic formula.
- The **WIC Medical Documentation Form** is incomplete or isn’t filled out correctly.
- The WIC RDN isn’t available to complete the form to send to the medical provider.
  - In this case, there isn’t a grace period for PediaSure.

**Note:** Staff can’t make changes to a prescribed therapeutic formulas or foods when a **WIC Medical Documentation Form** is in effect. See “Change Therapeutic Formulas or Foods When a WIC Medical Documentation Form is in Effect” in *Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods* for more information.

7. Assess the amount of formula required to meet the participant’s nutritional needs, unless the ounces per day is prescribed by the medical provider or recommended by the WIC RDN.

- For fully formula feeding infants, provide the maximum amount of formula.
- For partially breastfeeding infants, assess the amount of formula the infant needs during the Breastfeeding Review and issue the least amount of formula to support continued breastfeeding. See *Volume 1, Chapter 15 – Breastfeeding.*
For all participants over one year old receiving formula (including PediaSure) and a WIC food package, evaluate the amount of milk, formula, and foods needed.

8. Staff complete the release of information section of the WIC Medical Documentation Form (Box 6) allowing WIC staff to contact the medical provider with questions in **one of the following ways:**
   - Read the release statement to the participant or caregiver, obtain verbal verification from the participant or caregiver they understand and agree to the statement to release information to the medical provider. Document on the form that the participant or caregiver verbally agreed to allow WIC staff to share information with their medical provider.
   - Have the client or caregiver download the form, sign and date it and show the signed form to staff via cell phone video or through a secure video conference platform.

9. Scan the WIC Medical Documentation Form into the file and document the participant’s or caregiver’s agreement to the release of information statement in the individual Care Plan.

Notes:

- Staff must assign a nutrition risk factor in Cascades based on the qualifying medical diagnosis on the WIC Medical Documentation Form.
- In Procedure below, we’ve used the term “staff”. However, only the CPA can assess a participant’s nutritional needs and assign the food package. If the form indicates “Allow up to the maximum amount”, WIC staff and the participant or caregiver will determine the amount.
- The CPA must discuss the participant’s needs with the caregiver to determine the amount of formula needed for partially breastfed infants and for children who are also prescribed a full food package.
- See Chapter **Volume 1, Chapter 23 – WIC Foods** for more information.

PROCEDURE:

Staff:

A. Have a conversation with the participant or caregiver about the likelihood of a qualifying medical diagnosis before providing a **WIC Medical Documentation Form**.
B. Provide the **Infants (Birth to 12 months)**, **Children 1-5 years**, or **Women** form and refer to the medical provider if it’s likely the participant has a qualifying medical diagnosis.

- If the medical provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 response or illness, refer the participant to the WIC RDN for assessment and food package assignment.

C. Obtain a completed, signed **WIC Medical Documentation Form**.

1. If the medical provider with prescriptive authority completes and signs the form:

   **Note:** The most common prescriptive authorities include physicians, physician assistants, naturopaths, and advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNPs).

   a. Staff can accept electronic, faxed, or original forms with the provider’s stamp or signature.

   b. Staff can’t accept prescriptions written on a physician’s prescription pad.

   c. Review the form to see if any information is missing or needs clarification.

   d. Determine if staff need to contact the medical provider.

      - If staff contact the medical provider only asking for clarification and don’t share any participant information gathered at WIC, staff don’t need a Release of Information signed.

      - If staff share any participant information with the medical provider, they must have a release or documentation that the release was read to and acknowledged by the participant or caregiver on file.

   **Notes:** Staff have the option to ask participants to complete Box 6. Release of information on the **WIC Medical Documentation Form** or use their agency’s release form. Completing either form is optional for participant or caregivers.

2. If the WIC RDN completes and signs the form:

   a. The WIC RDN assesses the participant’s need for therapeutic formulas and foods, indicates the rationale for the assigned foods/formula in the
“notes” section of the form where the diagnoses are, and completes the form.

b. The WIC RDN documents the recommended length of time for the prescription.

c. The RDN signs the form next to the WIC Clinic information.

d. Staff fax the form to the participant’s medical provider with a cover letter and request acknowledgment of the prescribed food package and any changes to the food prescription.

- We recommend staff located in the clinic fax the completed Medical Documentation Form to the medical provider.
- Staff using agency laptops with a secure network may use a fax to email feature to send the form to the medical provider.
- We don’t recommend using personal fax machines or a computer using an unsecured server to fax participant confidential information to a medical provider.

D. Document any contact made with the participant’s medical provider in Cascades:

- Name of person contacted at the medical provider’s office.
- Any important information about a prescription or the diagnosis or medical condition (for example follow-up plans, special feeding instructions, corrections to make on the WIC Medical Documentation Form).
- Date of the contact.
- Name or initials of staff who contacted the medical provider.

**Note:** If the medical provider isn’t available, WIC staff may ask the medical provider’s staff to consult with the medical provider. The medical provider’s staff can relay messages back to WIC staff.

E. Record the prescription on the Prescribe Food Screen by pressing the Medical Documentation button:

1. Enter the Effective Date as the date the medical provider or WIC RDN signed the WIC Medical Documentation Form.
Note: Cascades will auto-fill with the current date. Staff must manually change the date unless the prescription was written on the same day.

2. Enter the Expiration Date indicated on the form.

Note: If the WIC RDN filled out the form and is waiting for the medical provider to respond, use the default Expiration Date in Cascades to set the 30-day grace period.

3. Select the qualifying medical diagnosis from the Medical Reason drop down list.
   - Select Grace Period when the WIC RDN completes the form.

4. Enter the Diagnosis Code or Verbal Order.
   a. If there’s a verbal order from the medical provider select the appropriate Verbal Order from the drop down list.
   b. If there isn’t a verbal order enter “NA” in the Diagnosis Code field.

Note: Leave the ICD Code field blank, Washington WIC doesn’t use the ICD codes.

5. Enter the medical provider’s name and telephone number.

6. Enter the medical provider’s email if available.

7. Enter the prescribed therapeutic WIC formulas and/or foods.

8. Document in the participant’s care plan that the RDN completed the form and it was sent to the participant’s medical provider for approval.

F. Assign a risk factor on the Assigned Risk Factors screen based on the qualifying medical diagnosis listed on the **WIC Medical Documentation Form**.

1. Mark “Other Medical Condition” if the WIC RDN fills out the form. Staff update the risk factors in the participant’s record after hearing from the medical provider.

2. Make a note in the participant’s care plan that the RDN filled out the MDF form, the form was sent to the medical provider, and staff are waiting on confirmation/changes to the participant’s food package.
G. The CPA assigns a food package based on the prescription information on the WIC Medical Documentation Form.

H. Issue benefits according to the Medical Documentation Form.
   
   • Issue therapeutic formulas on a 30-day grace period when the medical provider didn’t complete the WIC Medical Documentation Form or hasn’t responded to the form complete by the WIC RDN.
   
   • Issue Pediasure on a 30-day grace period when the WIC RDN determines the participant needs PediaSure, and staff are waiting for confirmation from the medical provider

I. Scan the WIC Medical Documentation Form into the file.

Information:

WIC federal regulations don’t allow staff to provide therapeutic WIC formulas and foods as a consideration to meet a participant’s cultural or personal preferences.

See “Provide Medical Foods and Medical Formulas through WIC” in this chapter when participants need medical foods or formulas that aren’t available from WIC.
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