Retention of Participants Through the First Five Years

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Outline

- Background and purpose
- History of project and formative research
- Description of the WIC to 5 program
- Evaluation results to date
- Agency experiences and perspective
Background and Purpose

- **WIC to 5** is a collaboration between the Illinois WIC program and researchers at the University of Illinois-Chicago, Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition to increase participation and retention of eligible children in WIC.

- Four WIC agencies across the state have been selected to pilot the program (Roseland Hospital, McLean County WIC, Macon County WIC, and Vermilion County WIC) and will be the first to implement this important project.

- Provide an overview of program design, training, and evaluation.
Overview of IL WIC Program

Average monthly caseload: **310,000**
(7th largest nationally)

- **68,786**
- **78,503**
- **147,739**

50% of caseload in Chicago/Cook Co.

**CONTRACTING AGENCIES**

- **99 Agencies**
- **> 170 Permanent Sites**

Source: IL WIC Data SFY2011
WIC Coverage Rates for Infants by FNS Region, 2010

Source: FNS 2013
WIC Coverage Rates for Children by FNS Region, 2010

Source: FNS 2013
Illinois WIC Retention Project

- 2011-2012 Formative Research
  - Focus groups, interviews, surveys
- 2013 WIC to 5 Program Development
- 2014 Pilot Program Launch and Evaluation
- 2015 Statewide Launch
## Formative research methods

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Data Type Participants</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Online Surveys (n)</th>
<th>Interviews (n)</th>
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<tr>
<td>WIC Staff</td>
<td>2 (n=23)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIC Coordinators</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vendors</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Head Start Staff</td>
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<td>Current WIC Guardians</td>
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<td>Former WIC Guardians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Providers</td>
<td>In process</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
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N=274
Barriers
Mentioned by caregivers, WIC staff, and vendors

WIC Families (individual level barriers)
- Perceived value of the food package
- Hectic/busy lifestyles
- Access to other food benefits
- Multiple jobs/looking for work

Issues at the WIC clinic
- Difficulty scheduling/rescheduling
- Long wait times
- Too much paperwork
- Unwelcome clinic environment
- Staff judgment

Issues at WIC Vendors
- Difficulty using food instruments
- Negative interactions with cashiers
- Stigma from other customers

Community level barriers
- Lack of awareness about WIC eligibility
- Transportation issues
- Unsupportive physicians
- Availability of food items
Facilitators
Mentioned by caregivers and WIC staff

- Friendly or helpful WIC staff
- Expands the family food budget
  - SNAP is never enough
  - For some: “WIC is the only help I get”
- New (since 2009) fruit and vegetable vouchers
- Integrated services at some sites
  - Immunizations, dental care, food centers (Chicago only)
- Appointment reminders
- Welcoming clinic environment/ fun for kids
- Interesting/ useful nutrition education sessions
Suggested Solutions
Mentioned by caregivers, WIC staff, and vendors

**Agency**
- Tailored messaging
- Sell WIC campaign
- Participant incentives
- Automated text reminders
- “Get to Know WIC Staff” photo board
- Tailor education based on WIC experience
- Waiting room video

**Community**
- Public education campaign
- Grocery delivery
- Mobile clinic
- Linkage with other services
- Partner with healthcare and childcare providers

**Vendor**
- Vendor Training
- WIC grocery store tour
- Switch to EBT
- Improved WIC labeling
Goals of WIC to 5

- Raising Client Awareness of WIC Eligibility and Benefits
- Increase Staff Incentives and Promote Staff Wellness
- Increase Image/Understanding of WIC among Health Care and Child Care Providers
- Provide Outreach and Potentially Training for Vendors
What is Included? (Theory of Planned Behavior)

*Targeted Communication to Clients

*Community Outreach
*Strategic Partnerships

*Shopping Education Module
*Vendor Outreach
*Staff Incentives and Wellness

Intention to Stay in WIC

Recertification Pick-Up Missed Appts. Redemption
What is Included?

**Targeted Communication**
- Increase Perceived Value of the WIC Food Package.
- Increase Awareness about WIC Eligibility.
- Promote Trust and Reduce Perceived Judgment from WIC Staff.

**Community Outreach**
- Increase Awareness About and Perceived Value of the WIC Program Among Family Members, Community Leaders, and Other Service Providers (In Process).
What is Included?

Strategic Partnerships

- Increase Perceived Value of the WIC Program Among Physicians and Child Care Providers

Shopping Education Module

- Reduce Barriers Associated with Shopping.
- Improve Recognition of WIC-eligible Foods and Package Sizes.
- Reduce Perceived Stigma Associated with Redeeming WIC Checks.
What is Included?

Vendor Outreach

- Improve Relationships between WIC Clients, Cashiers, and Store Managers (In Process)

Staff Incentives and Wellness

- Increase Perceived Value of Staff.
- Reduce Staff Stress.
- Improve Staff Perceived Efficacy to Retain Clients.
WIC to 5 Key Messages

Save
Helps our family save money.

Nourish
Provides nutritious foods kids need.

Grow
Supports healthy growth and development

Connect
Links families with other programs, providers, and resources.

Learn
Free advice and counseling from caring staff.
Targeted Communication to Clients about Retention
WIC to 5 Communication Timeline

Poster in Clinic Assessment Questions

Happy Birthday Card; Child’s Package Magnet; Board Book; Shopping Tips

WIC Retention Booster Card

WIC Retention Booster Card; Piggy Bank

WIC to 5 Targeted Communications Tool; Brochure; Bag; Magnet

WIC to 5 Shopping Ed

WIC Preschool Brochure

Graduation Certificate
Posters

Did you know that eligible children can receive WIC benefits until their 5th birthday?

“Why we stay with WIC to 5:”
- Save
- Nourish
- Grow
- Learn
- Connect

“We help families save money.
We provide nutritious food kids need.
We support healthy growth and development.
We help parents understand how to care for their kids.
We connect families with other programs, providers, and resources.

You think about the kids. It’s good for them to get the best food possible.”

“It helps a lot through the month. It saves money on fruits, vegetables, cereal, and milk.”

“I get to know more about other health issues like keeping their teeth clean and getting immunizations.”

Karen, mother of 5, all stayed in WIC until age 5

“It’s healthy for the kids and keeps them growing.”

Why we stay with WIC to 5:
- Save
- Nourish
- Grow
- Learn
- Connect
6 month follow-up visit

Take 5 for WIC to 5 Brochure

Take 5 for WIC to 5 Targeted Communication Tool/Flip Book
6 month follow-up visit

Magnet and Tote Bag

Get To Know You materials
1 Year of Age

Board Book about WIC Foods

Child Food Package Magnet

WIC Shopping Tips
Shopping Education Module

- Utilizes WIC Talk format and facilitated leadership principles
- Takes approximately 30 minutes
- Focuses on clients discussing shopping barriers and empowering them to come up with their own strategies
Community Outreach

Target outreach sites: Community Family Resource Centers, churches, SNAP offices, food banks, other agencies and service providers
Strategic Partnerships

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Illinois Chapter

Pocket guide for health care providers
Handbook for childcare providers
Online newsletter content
Continuing education credits via webinar
Package for offices: posters, band aids, outreach brochure
Staff Incentives and Wellness

- Tote bags, water bottles, pedometers, and other incentive gifts selected by sites
- Incentive program developed by WIC coordinators
- Wellness newsletters
- Empowerment training for WIC coordinators (In Process)
WIC to 5 Program Evaluation
### WIC to 5 Logic Model

#### Inputs
- Staff Time
- Client Incentives
- Client Materials
- Staff Incentives
- Provider materials

#### Activities
- Staff Training
- Staff Incentive Delivery
- Posters
- Conversations with clients
- Deliver client incentives and materials
- Physician packages and training
- Child care packages and training

#### Outputs
- WIC staff receive WIC to 5 training
- Clients see WIC to 5 poster in WIC agency waiting room
- Clients receive WIC to 5 brochure, bag, and magnet and discuss benefits to staying in WIC at 6 months recertification appointment
- Clients receive child food package magnet, board book, and birthday card at 12 month appointment
- Clients attend nutrition education module on shopping
- Clients discuss with staff concerns about retention at 2 year appointment
- Clients receive WIC to 5 pamphlet at 3 year appointment
- Clients discuss with staff progress while in WIC and plans for after WIC participation ends at 4 year appointment
- Clients receive WIC graduation certificate at 5 years
- WIC agencies implement incentive program
- Childcare providers and physician offices hang posters
- Childcare provider staff/director read handbook and newsletters; attend webinar
- Physicians and office staff/manager read pocket guide and newsletters; attend webinar
- Childcare providers and physicians talk to parents/caregivers about keeping child enrolled in WIC

#### Short-Term Outcomes
- Improved client attitudes, social norms, and self-efficacy related to attending WIC appointments and nutrition education, picking up WIC checks, shopping with WIC checks and redeeming WIC checks
- Increased staff empowerment
- Improved physician and child care providers' attitudes toward the WIC program

#### Long-Term Outcomes
- Increased duration of participation in WIC
- Increased likelihood of remaining in WIC until 5 years of age.
- Increased percentage of eligible children aged 1-5 years enrolled in WIC
Outcome Evaluation Plan

Longitudinal Survey for WIC Clients

- Recruit ~30 mother/child dyads from 4 pilot agencies and 3 control agencies for longitudinal survey

- Longitudinal survey includes:
  - Demographics and dyad/household characteristics
  - Theory of planned behavior questions to assess attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention
  - Potential modifiers including food security, infant feeding, perceived stress, food values, household organization, and hardship
  - Some process evaluation questions

Empowerment Survey for WIC Staff

- All staff at pilot and control agencies

Match survey responses to administrative data for program participation outcomes
WIC to 5 Evaluation

- Poster in Clinic
  - WIC to 5 Brochure; Targeted Communication Tool; Bag; Magnet
- 6 months
  - Happy Birthday Card; Child’s Package Magnet; Board Book; Shopping Tips
- 1 year
  - WIC to 5 Shopping Ed
- 15-18 mo.
  - Ask about concerns that might impact retention
- 2 years
  - WIC Pamphlet
- 3 years
  - Discuss how far client has come; plans for after WIC
- 4 years
- 5 years

- Preg-Birth
- 3-5 mo. Baseline Survey
- 6 months
- 7-8 mo. Survey
- 1 year
- 13-14 mo. Survey
- 15-18 mo.
- 2 years
- 25-26 mo.
- Final Survey
Process Evaluation Plan

- Collect ongoing program data from MIS database
- On-site observations
  - WIC Waiting Room
  - Counseling sessions with WIC CHP
  - Provider offices
  - Community outreach sites
- After visit client polling
- Focus groups with WIC staff
Recording Program Data in MIS (Cornerstone)

- 2 questions added to evaluate program delivery
- 1 question added to assess intended duration of participation
  - Asked at pregnancy, early postpartum, infants <6 months, and infants at 6 month follow-up
- 1 question added to assess reason to stay in program
PARTICIPANT

Participant ID: H100-6327-2353-00  Cur Last Name: HFI  Cur First Name: RETESTADULTM  Sec Last Name:
Group ID:
Birth Date: 12/12/1972  Age: 40  Address: 111413 THURSDAY  SPRINGFIELD  IL  62744

AS01 - ASSESSMENT

Assess Type: WCVE  WIC - CERT VISIT EDUCATION  Assess Nbr: 1 of 1
Assess Date: 12/03/2013  Assessor: 8051960 USER, CORNERSTONE

Reviewed WIC to 5 Program Script.
Provided WIC to 5 Materials to Client.
Reasons to Stay in WIC.
Time intended to participate in WIC.
WIC is a partnership
Nutrition Assessment
Health Care
Length of time(refer to category) ie: P, B, N, I, C
Reviewed WIC to 5 Program Script.
Provided WIC to 5 Materials to Client.
Reasons to Stay in WIC.

**Time intended to participate in WIC.**

WIC is a partnership
Nutrition Assessment
Health Care
Length of time (refer to category) i.e: P, B, N, I, C

ASSESSMENT ANSWERS
01 UNTIL 1ST BIRTHDAY
02 UNTIL NO FORMULA NEEDED
03 WHEN STOP BREASTFEEDING
04 CHILD STARTS/GOES TO DAYCARE
05 PARENT WORK/SCHOOL SCHEDULE
06 BELIEVE OTHERS NEED IT MORE
07 OTHER
08 DO NOT KNOW

ENTER=SELECT ESC=EXIT
Results to Date

- February 2014 program launch
- Posters hanging in clinic
- Delivery of 6 month brochure and targeted communication; 349 clients
- Asking pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding, and infants < 6 months how long they intend to stay in the WIC program; 517 clients
# Client Characteristics

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<th>Client Characteristics</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Client Type</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnant</td>
<td>207 (19.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postpartum</td>
<td>67 (6.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding</td>
<td>29 (2.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infants &lt;5 months</td>
<td>244 (23.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infants 5-8 months</td>
<td>349 (33.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants 8-11.9 months</td>
<td>118 (11.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children 1-4 years</td>
<td>303 (28.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>125 (11.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
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<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>5 (0.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>414 (39.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>632 (60.1)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1052</td>
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Intended duration of WIC participation

- Pregnant
- Postpartum (Not Breastfeeding)
- Breastfeeding
- Infant <5 months
- Infant 5-8 months (6 month follow-up)
Delivery of 6 month targeted communication

% of clients receiving script and materials

Client category

Infants 5-8 months (6 month visit)  Pregnant  Postpartum  Breastfeeding  Infants <5 months  Infants 8-11.9 months  Children 1-4 years

- Neither
- Script Only
- Materials Only
- Both Script and Materials
Reasons to Stay in WIC

- Saves money: 58.5%
- Gives healthy foods: 26.1%
- Helps learn and grow: 8.6%
- Has caring staff: 0.3%
- Gives advice/counseling: 2.9%
- Helps connect: 3.2%
- None of these: 0%
- Does not plan to stay: 0%
- Missing: 0.6%

% of caregivers at 6 month follow-up
The Local Agency Experience - Summary

> What are we doing to improve caseload
> How WIC to 5 has helped
> How we are doing with WIC to 5
> What have we found
Caseload
How do we get them here?
How do we keep them coming back?
Caseload

- Outreach
  - Community partnerships: health fairs; committees; networking events
  - Program awareness: flyer to local agencies, doctor offices, daycares, schools
  - Visibility: promotional materials displayed in the community
Schedule changes

- Walk-ins
- Late Monday clinic
- Saturday clinic
Welcoming clinic environment: Hospitality on a limited budget

- Check in desk – warm and welcoming staff
- De-clutter
  - Display only YOUR messages
  - Have an alternate place for community information
- Tidy waiting room
  - Clean up at noon and end of day
  - Torn books/magazine – get rid of them
Customer service

- Efficient quality service
  - Most important topic for today
  - Participant centered services
- Staff training and development – provide tools to be confident educators
- Staff recognition – staff that feels supported and appreciated provide better service
Ways WIC to 5 has helped

- Collaboration – brought us together to share ideas
  - Local agency ideas taken into consideration
- Tools – simple effective tools to discuss benefits of WIC
- Marketing/promotion – visuals/posters
- Incentives – participants and staff
  - McLean County Staff Recognition Program
- Onsite training
Roseland Hospital WIC Program
How are we doing with WIC to 5?

- It really doesn’t take a whole lot of extra time.
- It is an additional way to have participant centered conversations.
- It is a reminder to talk about benefits of WIC at each visit.
What we have found

- People have been missing the message that their child can be in WIC until 5 years of age (certifications, Family Case Management, closing visits)
- Misunderstand the value of the WIC food package – WIC to 5 illustrations help here
- Participants are receptive to WIC to 5 messages
Acknowledgements

Illinois Department of Human Services
- Penny Roth, MS RD
- Lashon Reese, MS RD

University of Illinois at Chicago
- Summer Porter, MS RD
- Molly McGowan, MPH

Pilot Site WIC Coordinators
- Karen Shiflett, Macon County
- Cheryl Sprague, BS CLC, Vermilion County
- Sharon Johnson-Jadeja, Roseland Hospital, Chicago
- Patrice Hughes, Roseland Hospital, Chicago
Next Steps

- Complete a fotonovella (compared to brochure)
- Revising child care provider materials to highlight synergy between Head Start nutrition guidelines and WIC.
- Work with vendors on WIC to 5 vendor/cashier training.
- Develop an WIC community outreach kit.
- Development of targeted communication tools/materials for after 2 years.
Questions?