



## West Virginia WIC Vendor Advisory Board Quarterly Update

January 24, 2019

**Participants:** By telephone conference

### Similac Soy Isomil Transition

- WIC will begin providing benefits for purchasing Similac Soy Isomil on January 29, 2019.
- WIC customers will continue to purchase Gerber Good Start Soy infant formula through April so your store may want to monitor sales to determine the need for both products in stock.
- Similac Soy Isomil MUST be in inventory for all stores with more than five registers by March 1, 2019 as part of minimum stock requirements. Stores with five or less registers, if not carrying Isomil as part of typical infant formula stock, must provide the product within 72 hours if requested by a WIC customer, WIC clinic, or Vendor Management Unit.
- The UPCs for Similac powder, concentrate, and Ready to Feed quart and 6 pack were released in the West Virginia WIC Approved Product List (APL) on January 5, 2019. Please apply the appropriate subcategory code, and receipt message when applying the APL file within your integrated system.
- Test buys for multi-state corporate system certifications have been successful. However, there have been several regional chain or independent stores which use NCR that have failed so PLEASE follow up with your third party processor to ensure the most recent APL is applied to your system.
- If you are uncertain if your system will successfully conduct a transaction for Isomil, and you can manually enter a card number, you may contact the WV WIC EBT Coordinator, Cindy Tanner, at 304-356-4502 to complete an eWIC live buy.

### Mandatory Shelf Tagging

- Shelf labels are mandatory as of February 1, 2019.
- The Vendor Management Unit will finish applying shelf labels in stores without corporate or distributor provided labels next week.
- Once your store is tagged we recommend your scanning coordinator ensure all labeled frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are mapped to cash value benefit. Also we are unable to check the APL while tagging, so we recommend retailers send an Excel® spreadsheet of any item(s) available in store or for order from your suppliers for any food categories which are presenting as problems during

transactions. If you submit a file or UPC request, the WV WIC EBT Coordinator will provide a response sharing which submitted items will be added to the APL, and when the file will be released containing those items.

- Shelf labelling will be considered during routine monitoring. Stores will receive warnings for missing shelf labels of 25 items or less UNLESS an entire food category is missing shelf labels. Sanctions may be issued for violations related to not shelf labelling WIC items.
- Corporations and stores which produce their own shelf labels had only one store visited by the Vendor Unit. The excel file we sent noting products that need a label should be applied to all stores statewide.
- If a store or chain will be transitioning to producing their own shelf labels, and hence replacing the green labels, please notify the Vendor Management Unit and send an electronic file of the shelf label.

#### **Similac RTF Products:**

- Similac® for Spit-Up Ready to Feed (RTF) 32 oz. containers is being discontinued due to limited customer demand and retail distribution. As retailers' inventories are depleted, they will not be replenished. As of January 18, 2019, the WV WIC Program stopped providing the option of Similac for Spit-Up 32 oz. RTF. While there will be no new WIC customers receiving this formula after this date, there are a few families which may spend Spit-Up RTF benefits until April.
- The Similac® for Spit-Up Powder in 12 oz. cans will still be available for purchase by WIC customers, and should be reflected in minimum stock of stores having over five registers.
- Similac Sensitive® 32 oz. Ready-to-Feed (RTF) is on nationwide low inventory. Abbott Nutrition, Inc. has estimated this product may be on backorder, and unavailable in retail locations, until April or May 2019.
- All WIC authorized stores are still expected to stock Similac Sensitive® in powder and/or concentrate as a minimum stock requirement.
- If your store does not have, and cannot order, Similac Spit Up or Similac Sensitive RTF stock, please advise WIC customers to contact their local WIC clinic to request a formula change. You may place a notice at shelf location AS LONG AS stock personnel are aware to remove the notice once inventory is replenished.

#### **Window Decal**

- All stores were mailed updated WV WIC Program decals with the new Shopping Guides implemented October 1, 2018. Per your Vendor Agreement, Section B, Article 13, "Window decal must be prominently displayed, and be seen from the outside of the store."
- **Please remove all previous decals, and display the new white decal which is a peel and stick window adhesive.**
- If your corporation develops a comprehensive door decal to display all accepted payment types and benefits, it must be approved by the West Virginia WIC Vendor Manager prior to use in place of or in addition to the WIC Program supplied decal. Keep in mind this decal must still be seen from the outside of the store.

## **Annual Training**

- Stores located in Central WV (Central WV WIC region), the eastern panhandle (Shenandoah Community Health Center region), Kanawha Valley (Valley Health Systems region), the technology corridor (Monongalia County Health Department region), and ski country (Randolph-Elkins Health Department region) will be receiving annual training announcement letters in the next week or so. Please provide email addresses for each store's training representative as soon as possible.
- Although multiple store personnel may participate in online annual training, only the staff responsible for training cashiers conducting WIC transactions will complete the training quiz.
- The online training will open March 1, 2019, and must be complete by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Last year there were issues accessing the training in some stores because of firewall security. Please try to access the course early to troubleshoot these types of problems prior to the due date.

## **Government Shutdown:**

- WIC Programs nationwide have funding to continue all operations through mid-March. Please continue to accept WV WIC benefits.
- If your store is unable to conduct WIC transactions because of system issues please clarify that in any posted sign message.
- The Vendor Management Unit will provide notification in writing via email as information is available regarding WIC funding if the government shutdown continues into the last weeks of February.

## **Annual VAB meeting:**

- March 20, 2019 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at 211 6th Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101. Please email the Vendor Unit if you are interested in attending.

Date of next quarterly voluntary call: **April 25, 2019 9:30 am**

- Dial 1-877-302-0757
- Enter Conference ID, 7232679, and press #

## **Answers to Questions at the End of the Call:**

### **What is the highest number of shelf tags that can be missing during routine monitoring?**

As shared in the Winter Edition of the WIC'r Basket, and during the phone conference, missing 25 or less shelf labels, or an entire food category (i.e. no tags for yogurt), will result in a routine monitoring warning letter. Repeated offenses may then result in a sanction.

**Similac Sensitive RTF is my best seller. Should I order more powder?** If you are still able to order Similac Sensitive RTF from your distributor or have stock, then proceed as usual. The Vendor Management Unit will be sharing with local clinics retail

locations that have been selling Similac Sensitive RTF so participants will be aware of where they may find product prior to any decision to switch the infant to powder.

**What will happen after the end of February/mid-March if the government shutdown continues?** The Vendor Agreement requires notice to vendors prior to any actions which change the conditions or articles of the contract. Please check your email regularly to ensure you receive timely updates.