Michigan WIC Connect Panel

- Kristina Ressler, Systems Coordinator
  State of Michigan
- Tracie Bolton, WIC Coordinator
  Ingham County WIC
- Lisa Banks, WIC Coordinator
  Oakland County WIC
- Gayathri Akella, WIC Coordinator
  Washtenaw County WIC
Michigan WIC Connect

Implementing a New Mobile Application
Implementing a New App

• WIC Connect Mobile Application was launched January 26, 2018, after development in April of 2016

• Now with more than 21,441 user accounts

• WIC Connect allows clients to:
  • Enter and update their contact information and demographics
  • Request WIC appointments, receive reminders, and access directions to WIC clinics and WIC approved stores
  • Monitor WIC benefits, access their WIC shopping list and find WIC foods using the UPC scan feature
Upcoming Features

Spanish Translation
• All screens will be able to be translated and displayed in both Spanish and English

Vendor Map Filters
• Allow clients to select the store type they are looking for

What to Bring
• Information regarding what to bring to upcoming appointments displayed prominently with the appointment reminder

Show important messages directly on home page
• Reminders including WIC Appointment Reminders, WIC Benefit Expiration Reminders, Certification Expiration Reminders, Food Package Prescription Renewal due

Flurry Software
• Allow developers to know what pages are most frequently used and viewed by clients, as well as app crash monitoring

WIC-WIC Dual Enrollment Filters
• Implementing filters to prevent existing WIC clients from creating new accounts through WIC Client Connec
The Future of WIC Connect

• Advertisement Campaign
  • Targeted advertisements through Mobile Apps and Facebook in order to promote WIC Connect to Clients and Potential Clients
  • Goal: Increase promotion, retention and decrease certification time through increased utilization of WIC Connect

• Assessment Questions
  • Reduce length of time spent during appointment by allowing clients to answer assessment questions through the app
  • Goal: Reduce Certification time and increase counseling and education

• Recipes
  • Recipes will be added to help clients learn to best utilize their remaining WIC benefits. The app will provide recipe ideas based on their remaining WIC benefits for the month
  • Goal: Increase redemption rates and improve client nutrition

• Nutrition Education
  • Allow clients to complete Nutrition Education lessons directly through the app.
  • Goal: Increase retention, improve access to Nutrition Education lessons
If you have questions or concerns regarding WIC Connect, please contact

Kristina Ressler, MPH
WIC System Requirement Coordinator

Email: ResslerK@Michigan.gov
Ph: 517-335-5633
WIC Connect

Implementation in Ingham County WIC
Staff Education and Buy In

• Ongoing discussion during development
  • Demos during conferences generated buzz

• January 2018 – shared enotice with staff
  • Two staff/clients downloaded immediately and shared with other interested staff

• February – discussion at staff meeting. Two staff/clients offered to share experience with all
• Dietetic Intern created information board in our Nutrition Education Information Mall
Staff Education and Buy In cont.

- February Huddle Meeting – discussed again and encouraged staff to use board
- March – presented at home visitor team meeting of MIHP, NFP, FOS, Healthy Start and shared app. Two additional staff/clients downloaded at meeting and shared with others
March – National Nutrition Month

Shopped with Public Information Officer and client to promote WIC Connect and Stick with WIC

WIC is for toddlers and preschoolers too! In fact, kids who stay on WIC may be healthier and more prepared to start school than similar children who do not participate. Each child over age 1 on WIC receives approximately $500 worth of healthy food each year, so stick with WIC until age 5.

For more information, call (517) 887-4326.
Clinic Flow

• Flyer for WIC Connect at Centralized Registration - Check In
  • MA introduces the app and reviews the functions
  • Encourages client to download and walks them through steps

• Waiting
  • If client needs to wait for CPA, they have time to explore the app
Clinic Flow cont

• Nutrition
  - Nutrition staff finish counseling session by having client log into app so they can show them their food package and next appointment in the app before the client leaves the WIC Clinic
  - Staff answers additional app questions as needed
Test app

- Staff are very excited to get the test app
- Some staff have requested this on their personal phones
- All county WIC phones will have the test app
- Shared home visiting staff have also requested the test app on their county phones
Oakland County WIC Connect

Lisa Banks, MSA
WIC Coordinator
First Steps

• Oakland County WIC surveyed clients at all WIC offices: Pontiac, Southfield and Walled Lake to determine satisfaction about the new mobile application with a 4 question survey.
• The feedback we received from the client survey is positive. Clients are excited about the new application.
Survey Questions

• What features do you most like about the application?
• How did you hear about the application?
• How likely are you to use the application?
• Please provide any ideas on how to improve the application?
Survey Results

• Question 1 – What features do you most like about the app? This was a multiple choice question with 10 choices.

• The top responses:
  – Access to WIC shopping list (33.5%)
  – Monitor WIC benefits (26.3%)
  – Access the WIC Food Guide (7.2%)
Survey Results

• Question 2 – How did you hear about the app?
• The top responses:
  – WIC Staff member (92%)
  – Word of mouth (5.3%)
  – OCHD Website (2.6%)
Survey Results

• Question 3 – How likely are you to use the app?
• The top responses:
  – Likely (50%)
  – Extremely Likely (44.4%)
  – Neither Likely nor unlikely (2.78%)
Survey Results

• Question 4 – Please provide any ideas on how to improve the app? See comments below:
  – Scan does not work consistently
  – Scan doesn’t work efficiently
  – Add feature – Remember me for next time to sign in
  – The yogurt is not updated in the app
  – Not all WIC items are displayed
  – Blast to inform clients of certain dates; i.e. Project Fresh
  – Benefits are delayed when receiving a new month
Thank you!

Questions?
North
Oakland Health Center
1200 N. Telegraph Rd
Pontiac, MI 48341
Phone: 248.858.1280

South
Oakland Health Center
27725 Greenfield Rd
Southfield, MI 48076
Phone: 248.424.7000

The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.
Enhancing the WIC Shopping Experience

Keshav Akells, Student Intern
Gayathri Akella, MS, RD, IBCLC
Emily Bair, University of Michigan Dietetic Intern
September 20th, 2018
Shopping Experience is a key factor for Program Promotion & Participant Retention!
In January of 2018, Michigan WIC launched the WIC Connect app to “make it easier for potential and current clients to access benefits, schedule appointments, and locate other program information”.
An important question was raised—“Will the WIC Connect app improve the shopping experience of WIC clients?”
To answer this question a WIC Shopping Experience Survey was developed to:

1. Explore the barriers WIC clients face when using their benefits
2. Quantify client familiarity with the WIC Connect app
3. Assess the efficacy of the WIC Connect app in helping clients optimize their WIC benefits & reduce barriers to their shopping experience
What was included in the survey?

- Simple, clear, and easy to read wording
- 1 page single spaced
- Closed and open ended questions covering:
  - How easy is it for you to use your WIC EBT card?
  - Are WIC foods easy to find?
  - What are the challenges you face when using your benefits?
  - Where do you normally use your WIC EBT card?
  - How familiar are you with the WIC Connect app?
In March 2018, Washtenaw WIC began actively promoting the WIC Connect app to clients.
As of September 2018, the WIC Connect App had been promoted for 6 months.

Surveys were distributed at 2 time points:

Survey #1
March 2018

Survey #2
September 2018
Who participated in the survey?

- 166 total clients from the Washtenaw County Health Department WIC Office participated in the survey
- Surveys were distributed randomly to clients on paper and collected by dietetic interns and staff
- Respondents were all recipients of WIC or parents/guardians of children receiving WIC benefits
From then until now...

Have there been any changes in the WIC shopping experience after 6 months of access to WIC Connect?
Ease of Using the WIC EBT Card

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<thead>
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<th>March</th>
<th>September</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Easy</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat Easy</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat Hard</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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Challenges to Using WIC Benefits

March 2018
- Locating WIC Products (44%)
- Inadequate Stock (25%)
- Check-Out Process (13%)
- Separating WIC & Non-WIC Purchases (9%)

September 2018
- Locating WIC Products (21%)
- Inadequate Stock (37%)
- Check-Out Process (24%)
- Separating WIC & Non-WIC Purchases (16%)
- Other (9%)
Other Challenges Reported by Clients

- Items in WIC Food Guide not ringing up as WIC eligible (even when listed in MI WIC food guide)
- Card readers improperly identify “no benefits”
- Shaming from cashier/ grocery managers
- Redeeming WIC benefits at self-checkouts does not work
- No rainchecks for WIC items that are out of stock
<table>
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<th>September</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meijer</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmart</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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## Client Awareness of WIC Connect App

<table>
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<th>September</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No*</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Those clients that did not know about WIC Connect received verbal instructions and handout.
Client Use of WIC Connect App

In the second session of surveys conducted, an additional question was posed:

“If you know about the WIC Connect app, do you have it on your phone?”

47% Yes 53% No
WIC Connect: Drawbacks and Benefits

**Drawbacks:**
- Need a smart phone
- Too many Apps these days
- Data usage/storage space

**Benefits:**
- Free
- Easy to use, convenient, time saving
- Keeping track of benefits
- Barcode scanner
- Ease of appointment making
1. The WIC EBT card is becoming easier to use.

2. WIC foods are becoming easier to find in grocery stores.

3. Currently, the #1 challenge reported to using WIC benefits is “inadequate stock” of WIC items. That has changed since March when the #1 challenge was locating WIC products (44% vs. 21%).

4. More clients are “aware” of WIC Connect today, but only about 50% currently have it downloaded to their phones.

5. Not using WIC Connect is related to availability of smart phones, data usage, and storage space.

6. Clients report the main benefits of using WIC Connect include ease in checking benefits, barcode scanner, and appointment making.

In Summary:
Next Steps:

- WIC staff to use test App to walk clients through the App
- Help clients to connect to wichealth.org through App
- Utilize WIC Connect App for WIC outreach so potential clients can schedule their own appointments
- Create posters for WIC outreach
User-Friendly handouts for clients to emphasize benefits & provide easy steps to download and access the App!

Flyers Available in:
- English
- Spanish
- Arabic

Get Connected..... to the Michigan WIC Connect Mobile App!

- View your WIC Shopping list
- Check your WIC benefit/balance
- Use UPC scan feature at stores to find WIC approved foods
- Schedule/confirm WIC appointments
- Update your contact information
- Directions & phone numbers to WIC approved stores

Once you download the app, you will see the home screen below. Select: “Existing WIC Clients – Register”

You will need:
- WIC Family ID#: ______________________________
- WIC EBT Card #: ______________________________

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Descarga hoy la única aplicación aprobada por Michigan WIC!

- Accede a tu lista de compra de WIC
- Controla tus beneficios/balance de EBT
- Escanea el código UPC en las tiendas para encontrar alimentos aprobados por WIC
- Solicita cita y recibe recordatorios de tus citas en WIC
- Actualiza tu información de contacto
- Encuentra direcciones & números de teléfono de las tiendas que reciben WIC

Una vez que descargues la aplicación, verás esta pantalla

Seleciona: “Existing WIC Clients – Register”

Necesitas:
- Número WIC ID de Familia: ____________________________
- Número de tarjeta/EBT de WIC: ____________________________

This information is an equal opportunity provider.
Are you a WIC client? You can now use WIC Connect Mobile App to make shopping easier!

- View your WIC shopping list
- Check your WIC benefit/EBT balance
- Use UPC scanner at the shelf to see if food is WIC approved
- Schedule/confirm WIC appointments
- Update your contact information
- Directions & phone numbers to WIC approved stores

Once you download the app, you will see the home screen below.

Select ‘Existing WIC Clients - Register’

You can always call WIC at 734-544-6800 or visit WIC online at www.michigan.gov/wic
You may be eligible for WIC!
Call 734-544-6800 or set up your own appointment through the WIC Connect Mobile App!

Look for the WIC icon!

Once you download the app, you will see the home screen to the right.

Click here to find the closest WIC clinic and to make your appointment!