

Section 1.18: Separation of Duties to Assure Program Integrity

4/2023

References: 7 CFR 246.4(a)(27), MOM Section 5.2

Policy: Controls and procedures must be in place to ensure Separation of Duties (SOD) during certification. At a minimum, a staff person may not determine both income eligibility and medical/nutrition risk for the same WIC participant. If only one person is available to determine both income and nutrition risk, a post review of the certification record must be completed by the WIC Coordinator or designee.

Purpose: To ensure Program Integrity by involving two staff members in eligibility determinations during certification.

Procedures

- SOD requires two staff members for each certification. The staff person who determines a participant's income eligibility cannot also determine or document that participant's medical/nutrition risk; another person, a CPA, must assess nutrition risk and offer nutrition counseling. SOD must be auditable in each individual participant record. Either person may issue food benefits.
- In the event that one person must determine both income eligibility and nutrition risk during a certification, the Local Agency Coordinator or designee must conduct a post review of all non-breastfeeding infant certification records and a random sample of at least 20% of all other one-staff certification records within two weeks of the certification. Chart reviews must be documented in a SOD-Review note in the participant record in the WIC Information System. See Guidance, below, for more information about post review of one-staff certifications.
- Local Agencies must develop a SOD Plan describing how they will comply with these requirements at each of their clinics, if different.
 - The Local Agency must submit a plan for ensuring separation of duties. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the State Agency.
 - If there are any changes to the original plan, the Local Agency must update their plan for review and approval by the State Agency.
 - Compliance will be reviewed by the WIC Consultant during Management Evaluations.

Suspected Fraud/Abuse

- The Local Agency Coordinator and staff are required to report questionable certifications and benefit issuance to the State WIC Consultant within a week of the issue being identified. Any reported issues will be evaluated by the State WIC Agency.
- Any deliberate efforts to defraud or abuse the Minnesota WIC Program shall be considered an act of employee misconduct.

Guidance

Ongoing Local Agency Oversight of SOD and One-Staff Certifications

- Local Agencies are expected to monitor clinic and staff activities to ensure that there is SOD in all clinics, that records of any one-staff certifications are being reviewed, and that the SOD plan submitted to the State Agency is up to date. Local Agency WIC leadership is responsible for determining and managing SOD oversight and monitoring activities. See Resources below for the Infoview report, *Certifications Completed by One Staff Person*, that is available to agency staff for auditing charts.
- In clinics where two-staff certifications are not possible, it is recommended that the agency rotate the staff covering that clinic location.
- **Post Review of Certification Records for One-Staff Certifications:** Aspects of the certification process (e.g., income, identity, residency, and nutritional risk) are suggested for SOD chart reviews in one-staff certifications. The following actions or activities may be helpful items to look for when conducting record reviews:
 - Transactions occurring outside regular clinic hours. See Resources, below, for the Infoview reports that are available to agency staff for identifying these transactions.
 - The length of time a participant is certified and the benefits issued do not match.
 - A presence of infant records with no corresponding mother participants.
 - Unreasonable or missing height/weight measurements and/or blood test results.
 - An unusual amount of like or similar height/weight measurements and blood test results contained in the casefiles.
 - A large percentage of out-of-state transfers (VOCs) issued/received in comparison to other clinics during the same time period.

A sample *Local Agency Internal Chart Review for One-Staff Certifications* is available in [Exhibit 1-Q: Local Agency Internal Chart Review for One-Staff Certifications \(SAMPLE\)](#).

If your Local Agency has:

- **Ongoing one-staff certifications:** Local Agencies are to complete, at a minimum, a biweekly review of SOD reports for one-staff certifications. The Coordinator or designee should evaluate the report and determine if any of the displayed information necessitates

additional record review. If a concern is identified from a report, the record should be reviewed. At a minimum, the Local Agency Coordinator or designee must conduct a post review of all non-breastfeeding infant certification records and a random sample of at least 20% of all other one-staff certification records within two weeks of the certification. This chart review must be documented in a SOD-Review note.

- **Occasional one-staff certifications:** Local Agencies may follow the above procedure. Or, the Local Agency may choose to have CPAs notify their WIC Coordinator or designee of the one-staff certification after it occurs so the Coordinator or designee can review the record. Agencies who choose this option must also complete a quarterly review of SOD reports and conduct record reviews as described above.
- **Situations where clinics “always” have two people involved in certifications:** Local Agencies should review SOD reports quarterly and determine if any one-staff certifications have occurred. If there are records without SOD identified on the report, the WIC Coordinator or designee should review the record(s) and document the review in a SOD-Review note in the WIC Information System.

Documentation

Local agencies may use one of the following options to document SOD:

- **Certification Guided Script:** On the date of the WIC certification appointment, one staff person reviews and verifies income, including adjunct eligibility. That person starts the Certification Guided Script (CGS) and enters the Demographic Information, including income, then closes the script. The second person, a CPA, reopens the CGS and completes the other portions of the certification process, including medical/nutrition risk, and finishes the certification. This option must be completed on the same day to ensure reports are accurate. If income must be checked on a date prior to the certification appointment, use the SOD-Income Note documentation option, below.
- **SOD-Income Notes:** Income may be documented in a SOD-Income note for each household member being certified up to 21 days before a certification is started or up to 14 days after the certification is completed.
 - The CPA who determined medical/nutrition risk eligibility cannot be the person to write the SOD-Income note. If the staff person who determined income eligibility is unable to write the SOD-Income note, a staff person or CPA, other than the one who determined medical/nutrition risk eligibility, may create the SOD-Income note.
- **One-staff Certifications:** If a second staff person is unable to review income documentation for the purposes of SOD, scan at least one personal participant document into the participant folder of the WIC Information System for each household member being certified. Avoid scanning unnecessary documents. If a second staff person determines income eligibility, scanning income documentation into the WIC Information System should not be standard practice.

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- If the applicant is **not adjunctively eligible**, scan an acceptable proof of income such as:
 - Pay stub(s)
 - W-2 forms
 - Tax return
 - Written statement from the employer
- If the applicant is **adjunctively eligible**, scan a proof of identity such as:
 - Crib card
 - Health benefits (insurance card)
 - Photo ID

Pending Eligibility and Presumptive Eligibility

For both Pending and Presumptive eligibility, SOD is documented at two times:

- At the time of certification, and
- When the participant returns with proof of income (pending eligibility) or proof of medical assistance enrollment (presumptive eligibility). The person who determines/verifies income eligibility must be different than the person who determined nutrition risk at the certification.
 - Document income verification in a SOD-Income note following the same procedures at certification, and include the name of the staff person who completed the verification.

Resources

The Local Agency Coordinator or designee with [Infoview](#) access can use the following reports to help assure program integrity. Information about each report can be found on the [Infoview Report Templates- Reference](#). These resources can be used to complete [Exhibit 1-Q: Local Agency Internal Chart Review for One-Staff Certifications \(SAMPLE\)](#):

- Certifications Completed by One Staff Person – Infoview Report
- Daily Staff Productivity - Infoview Report
- Benefits Issued & Certs Performed Outside of Information System Hours - Infoview Report

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[Exhibit 1-Q, Local Agency Internal Chart Review for One Staff Certification \(SAMPLE\)](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/exhbts/ex1/1q.docx>)

[Infoview](#) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/reports/infoview.html>)

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Infoview Report Templates- Reference

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/reports/infoview/reference.pdf>
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Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program 625 Robert St N, PO BOX 64975, ST PAUL MN 55164-0975; 1-800-657-3942, health.wic@state.mn.us, www.health.state.mn.us. To obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942

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