DATE: November 7, 2018
TO: WIC Coordinators
FROM: Nutrition and Clinic Services Unit
SUBJECT: Introducing Education Choice: Part 1

We are excited to introduce Education Choice statewide!

Quality nutrition services is an important goal of the Minnesota WIC Program. Providing those services is becoming more challenging. Family work schedules make it difficult to attend WIC clinic; transportation is limited for some families; and technology is changing how individuals find information and learn. To help meet those changing demands, Minnesota WIC is introducing Education Choice. Education Choice expands opportunities to provide nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion & support. With Education Choice, participants choose how they want to receive nutrition education at follow up visits. Participants can choose from in-person, online or phone contacts.

Benefits of Education Choice:

- Convenient – phone discussion & online learning is easy to access.
- Relevant – young adults are comfortable learning online.
- Reduces barriers to participation – addresses concerns with work schedule, transportation issues, lack of parking near clinic.
- Individualizes the experience – the participant selects the learning method best for her.
- Variety for staff – new opportunities to provide education.
- New opportunities for scheduling – helps manage caseload and staff schedules differently.
- Improves participant satisfaction – may improve caseload retention and participation.

Education Choice is not a shortcut:

- Expectations for Nutrition Education have not changed – Federal Regulations and State policy for providing Initial and Additional Education contacts remain the same. See MOM Section 6.7, Additional Education and MOM Section 6.6, High Risk Care Plans.
- Local agencies must maintain data privacy requirements. See MOM Section 1.7, Data Privacy with updated recommendations for use of email and text messaging with participants.
- Requires similar staff time; however, some staff time may shift from working in clinic to providing other types of educational contacts.

There are local WIC agencies implementing Education Choice, some as pilot agencies. The pilot agencies are collecting data to identify participant education choices and to assess participant satisfaction with their education choice. Watch the Wednesday Update for pilot evaluation results when available.

State WIC staff worked with pilot agencies to develop Education Choice materials and training resources. Education Choice documents are now available on the MDH WIC website Education Choice.
Use the materials to learn how to implement Education Choice. The materials include:

- **Education Choice for Participants** Module – Provides an overview of Education Choice and how to implement it.
- **Checklists** – Outlines training, preparation and logistics of providing phone or online education.
- **Wichealth procedures** – Details how to implement wichealth in your agency.
- **Guidance in Scheduling** – Suggested procedures for scheduling appointments.
- **Phone Counseling documents** – Guidelines and quick tips for phone counseling.
- **Appointment Menus** – WIC Staff tool for presenting the 3 education choices to participants.
- **Wichealth flyers** – Flyers for participants describing how to use wichealth.
- **Phone flyers** – Phone appointment reminders for WIC participants.
- **Email and Text Tips and Template** – Suggested ways to use interactive emails or text for follow-up.

Interested in implementing Education Choice?

- Check out the Education Choice materials on the MDH WIC website [Education Choice](#).
- Discuss your plan with your state consultant. Submit the required documents to your state consultant, as outlined in the **Education Choice for Participants** module, including:
  - Checklist for Phone Education
  - Checklist for wichealth.org
  - MOM Exhibit 8-G

In next week’s Wednesday Update:

- Lessons learned by agencies using Education Choice.
- Thinking about implementing Education Choice in the future? Learn what you can do now to prepare.

Questions about Education Choice? Contact your state WIC consultant.