DATE: November 14, 2018  
TO: WIC Coordinators  
FROM: Nutrition and Clinic Services Unit  
SUBJECT: Introducing Education Choice: Part 2 - Lessons Learned & Preparation

We are excited to share more information about Education Choice!

The Education Choice, November 7th Wednesday Update included the Benefits of Education Choice and described available Education Choice materials on the MDH WIC website. This week we will provide some lessons learned by agencies using Education Choice, and share ideas on how you can prepare to implement Education Choice.

**Lessons learned by agencies using Education Choice:**

- **How long does it take to train staff for implementing Education Choice?** Agencies shared that it takes about 3-4 hours total. The method of training varies by agency, but may include a combination of training at a staff meeting along with time spent on independent review of materials.

- **Describe staff satisfaction with Education Choice** – As with any new project, there is a learning curve. Agencies overall perceive it as a positive initiative. Lindsey Ahlert, Sherburne County WIC Coordinator, shared, “We have found that phone conversations have been equally (or more!) effective as in-person follow-ups. We sometimes are finding the phone call conversations go past the 15 minute slot – and staff feel the discussions have been meaningful and productive.”

- **Describe WIC participant satisfaction for using Education Choice** – Jessica Holst, Fillmore County WIC Coordinator, shared, “Our participants enjoy the flexibility and ease of use. Many of them have transportation issues or work conflicts that interfere with regular clinic hours, so they appreciate that they can receive education online or over the phone. The idea of only needing to come to the clinic twice a year versus every quarter is appealing to them.”

- **What lessons would you like to share with other agencies?**
  - Maggie Domski, Washington County WIC Coordinator, shared that in the beginning of their Education Choice pilot most participants chose an in-person nutrition visit for additional education. Over time, staff have become quite skilled in how the Education Choice is offered and framed for clients. Now, more participants are choosing the phone and wichealth options!
  - Reminders continue to be very important for phone and online follow-up appointments, commented Lindsey Ahlert.
  - Washington County runs a report a few times a month to identify which participants have missed benefit issuance. Staff call those participants. If staff time allows, nutrition education is provided by phone and benefits are mailed. This practice helps participants and makes clinic days less hectic.
Thanks to Sherburne, Olmsted, Washington, Fillmore, St. Louis and Wabasha Counties for sharing their experiences.

If you are thinking about implementing Education Choice in the future, here are things you can do now to prepare:

- Check out the Education Choice materials on the MDH WIC website Education Choice
- Learn how wichealth.org works.
  - If you do not have access to wichealth.org, contact help@wichealth.org to set up a wichealth account. Provide the name; email address, county and state information for each staff member requesting access.
  - Your wichealth account will provide access to the administrative site, wichealthsupport.org. Watch the wichealth Academy staff training modules found on the wichealthsupport site. Staff can view the modules together at staff meetings or independently.
- Brainstorm how your agency can promote Education Choice.

When you are ready to implement Education Choice:

- Discuss your plan with your state WIC 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

Questions about Education Choice? Contact your state WIC consultant.