DATE: January 22, 2020
TO: WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators & Coordinators
FROM: Breastfeeding, Training, and Communications Unit
SUBJECT: WIC-Hospital Collaboration: St Louis County

Beth Hanni, from St Louis County WIC, reached out to hospitals in her community after receiving the Coffective Match Reports. Although one of the hospitals did not complete a survey, and thus did not receive a Match Report, Beth found that whether or not they completed a survey, hospitals were interested in connecting, learning about WIC, and coordinating services.

Beth shared: There have been a lot of changes to the WIC program over the past years and months, so I wanted to share information with front-line staff at the hospital during their shift change meeting. I did a 10-minute presentation with them. To get started, I called the nurse manager of the local hospital and explained my outreach interests, asked if they would be interested, and set up times to do the presentation. In the future, I plan to do an informational table on WIC and peer services at one of our local hospitals (again, will be in position to catch staff on shift change). I plan to bring a peer counselor along.

She has had several meetings with hospital staff, first connecting with the OB nurse manager at one hospital. At the other hospital, she attended the hospital lactation meeting, and then arranged to share about WIC at a few of the 7 am and 3 pm shift change meetings, as noted above. She received many questions about WIC, and found that staff were surprised at the income guidelines, the variety in the food package, and the breastfeeding services/aid St Louis County WIC offers. She is working on developing a “virtual WIC tour” through videos at the clinic when there are no clients present. She is now attending the lactation meetings at one of the hospitals on a regular basis – and had not been attending those before she reached out. Other tips from Beth:

- **Useful materials in the Match Reports:** The “About WIC Presentation” guide had some good ideas to use. The “Facilitated Meeting” and “Hospital Tour” had guidance that was helpful.
- **Try not to get overwhelmed.** The MATCH report has a lot to offer, but I would suggest just tackling one or two items at a time. Start somewhere. Because once you start, new ideas that emerge. For example, because we have been coordinating more with both local hospitals, we now have the opportunity to go to a St. Luke’s OB/GYN staff meeting and give a 15-20 minute long presentation about WIC services and the breastfeeding help we also provide. I am excited to be able to touch base with the physicians on the prenatal end of things because, of course, we like to get pregnant women on WIC. The earlier the better, for so many reasons.
- **Involve other WIC agencies.** I recommend connecting with other local WIC agencies. In connecting with our other local WIC agencies, I found out that they are happy to be involved in the outreach. Better to share the work involved, glean more ideas from each other, and better on the budget if the work is spread out. This is easily done with a “group email” involving all interested parties. On our WIC brochure I now include other local WIC agency phone numbers.

Questions? Contact mary.b.johnson@state.mn.us or Carrie.klun@state.mn.us. Use Coffective in the subject line.