



# CLINIC LAGNIAPPE

Louisiana WIC's Clinic Staff Newsletter



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## Healthy Families All Year Long

### Louisiana WIC Welcomes Summer

By: Leslie Lewis, Nutrition Operations Manager, Bureau of Nutrition Services

Welcome to the June issue of LA WIC Clinic Lagniappe. This issue should have come out in May, but sadly, LaNaya Carter, who was our Outreach Coordinator and lead for the newsletter, left BONS for a new position with Ochsner. We wish her all the best! We are currently working to fill LaNaya's position, as well as several other positions in BONS, including a QI Manager, a Vendor Fraud and Investigations Manager, Business Analytics Specialist, and ME and Fraud Program Monitor.

June marks the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY). As our BONS Central Office prepares for the end-of-year transition, we want to thank your dedicated local clinic and regional staff for all your hard work and service. You persevere and continue to show up for our WIC families each and every day and in the middle of pandemics, storms and other challenges. We appreciate all that you do and your assistance as we wrap up SFY2022.

And since we have mentioned storms ... with June also comes the beginning of the 2022 hurricane season. While we hope it is an extremely quiet season, we urge all clinics to be prepared and to review the WIC Disaster Plan which can be found in the WIC library.

We continue to navigate the Abbott formula recall. This recall has been unprecedented and has forced WIC families and staff to navigate through uncharted waters. We can't say enough how thankful we are to the staff that serve our WIC families and provide them with much-needed guidance and reassurance during this stressful time.

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Now for some good news!

Louisiana WIC has partnered with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for the last several years to deliver the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) to select WIC clinics. We are so excited to say that this year, FMNP will utilize electronic cards instead of coupons. A training for clinic staff was held in June, so stay tuned for more details.

Self-checkout is now available at WIC-authorized Walmart stores in Louisiana! Participants may NOT use self-checkout lanes at any other stores, but Louisiana WIC is working with other retailers to see if this option can be available at other WIC-authorized stores. To learn more about how to use self-checkout in Walmart stores, click [here](#).

## Program Updates

### Louisiana WIC Virtual Conference



The Louisiana WIC Conference held on May 20 was a major success! The conference was attended far and wide with over 400 attendees representing Louisiana's 9 regions.

Participants were able to attend a multitude of sessions on topics such as addressing health disparities in families, the 2022 Abbott formula recall, and designing effective randomized trials for e-health interventions. The sessions were very informative and instrumental in laying the groundwork for Louisiana's next steps in improving maternal and child health.

Although virtual, there were plenty of opportunities for engagement and attendees were awarded points for participation. Attendees were able to ask questions and have them answered throughout the sessions and were able to network and converse in the many chat rooms.

In the quest for leaderboard winner, there were many contenders. We want to thank everyone for their participation which made this such a fulfilling event. We want to congratulate our very own Evon Lavergne-Prudhomme for ranking 2nd on the leadership board. Go, Evon!

Overall, this was a great event filled with Louisiana's very best. We applaud everyone and their commitment to improving maternal and child health outcomes for our state. See you all next year!

### Abbott Formula Recall



The 2022 Abbott Nutrition formula recall continues to greatly impact WIC families and staff. To date, Louisiana WIC has added 89 allowable formula substitutions to the approved product list in response to the recall, including RTF options and products from other brands such as Enfamil and Good Start, store brand products and larger canned products.

At this time, Louisiana WIC has waivers in place to accept the substitutions until August 31. We will continue to do all that we can to allow our WIC participants as much flexibility as possible.

### Contract Clinic News

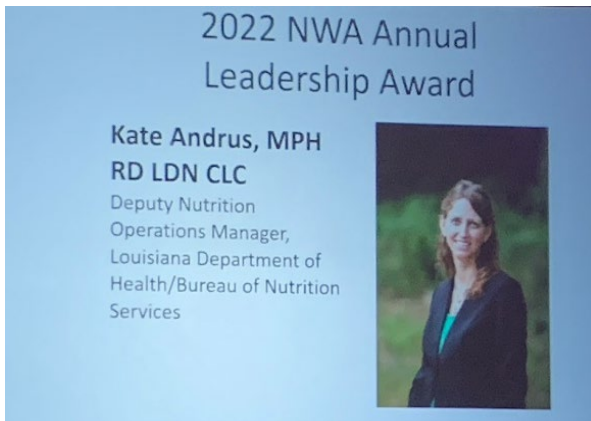


Reminder: It is nearly the end of the State Fiscal Year. Please be sure to review the email sent on June 2 and adhere to all the deadlines included. Please reach out to our Business Team for any questions!

## BONS Health Equity

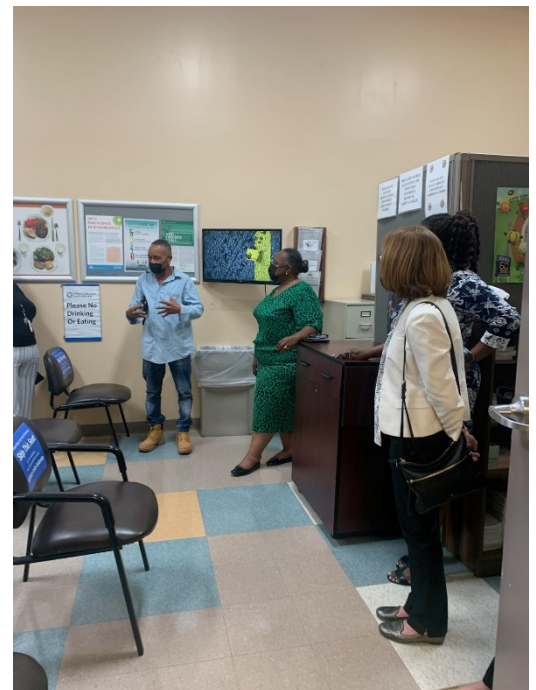
### NWA Leadership Award

Congratulations to Kate Andrus, Deputy Nutrition Operations Manager, for receiving the National WIC Association (NWA) Leadership Award for her commitment to health equity. Kate received this award at the annual NWA Conference held in New Orleans May 22-26, 2022. During the time in her role as Deputy Nutrition Operations Manager at Louisiana WIC, Kate has exemplified her dedication to working on health equity issues that affect families worldwide and locally. She demonstrates her vocation by advocating for equal access to nutritious food for mothers and young children, supporting the mission, vision and values of the NWA, LDH and BONS.



### USDA Visits Ascension DePaul

On April 20, 2022, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Administrator Cindy Long, Southwest Regional Administrator Bill Ludwig and other senior officials from the USDA visited the Ascension DePaul Community Health Center in New Orleans. BONS State Agency staff joined DePaul staff to showcase the wraparound services, including WIC, provided at the center. We were able to speak with several participants who thanked the DePaul staff for the great services that they provide to the community.



*A WIC participant (far left) speaks with Stephenie Marshall (second from left), executive director of DePaul Community Health Centers (DCHC), and Cindy Long (fourth from left), USDA Food & Nutrition Service administrator, about his experience at DCHC's Carrollton location.*

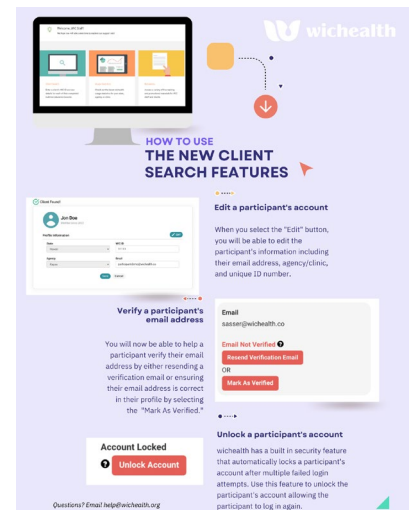
# Did You Know?

## WIChealth.org - New Client Search Features

By: Celia Bridgeforth, WIC Nutrition Education Manager

Did you know that WIChealth has new client search features? The client search features will allow staff to search for clients' WIChealth accounts with their Family ID or email address. Staff will also have the ability to reset locked accounts and edit account Family ID number, clinic and email address. Staff will only have access to edit and search for clients assigned to their clinic.

Watch this [brief video](#) to learn more about the new client search features.



## Research Study on Reducing Risk of Diabetes in Women

By: LaNaya Carter, Program Monitor

Louisiana WIC is working on a research project with Tulane University, focused on different approaches for delivering an intervention concentrated on healthy eating and exercise to women who use WIC services and recently had gestational diabetes (GDM). This project is based on the Diabetes Prevention Program, and includes a survey for postpartum women with a history of gestational diabetes.

Last month, State Agency shared information about the research study and survey with WIC participants via text messaging. Clinics may also share information about the survey with WIC participants. Women who are eligible and complete the survey, which takes approximately 30 minutes, will receive a \$25 gift card from the study. To promote the research study and survey in your clinic, [click here](#) to download the flyer.

### Clinic Participation in the Research Study

Based on information learned from surveys and other ongoing preliminary work and testing, Tulane is developing a one-year intervention based on the Diabetes Prevention Program for postpartum women with a history of GDM who use WIC services. The Diabetes Prevention Program is a 12-month program led by health coaches focused on healthy eating, exercise and moderate weight loss that has been shown to reduce risk of diabetes.

A randomized trial will be conducted to test this intervention in WIC clinics throughout Louisiana. We aim to recruit approximately 10 WIC participants from each participating WIC clinic over a one- to two-year period that which would start in fall 2022 or winter 2023. The long-term goal of this project is that, if effective, acceptable and feasible, this intervention could be implemented and made available for WIC participants with a history of GDM in Louisiana and other states.

The Tulane team would like to speak with WIC clinics that may be interested in partnering on this project. The project would provide funding and resources for any participating clinics. If your clinic is interested in learning more, please reach out to Kirsten Dorans at [kdorans@tulane.edu](mailto:kdorans@tulane.edu) or 504-988-0883.



## Cheers For Peers!

### Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Spotlight

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#### Monique Mitchell

Monique Mitchell, Peer Counselor extraordinaire, is the recipient of Cheers for Peers for April 2022. Monique has been with the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) program for almost a year and provides wonderful, loving support for participants in Region 3, even with a newborn herself and Hurricane Ida damage to her home. Monique builds excellent rapport with her moms and they know who is calling before Monique has a chance to say her name!



**Monique Mitchell**  
April 2022 Cheers for Peers

Monique recently was able to solve a mom's problem with her hospital-grade pump from WIC. A mother from St. John clinic delivered at 35 weeks at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge. The hospital LC filled out the request for a hospital-grade pump for this mom, and St. John PHU issued mom a pump during her recertification appointment and referred to Monique for continued lactation support. A week later, the hospital LC emailed again, asking for assistance in troubleshooting this pump, since the mother reported that the WIC hospital-grade pump's suction was weak. In no time, Monique had figured out that the mom was using too large of a flange size, because the mom thought the flange size was equivalent to breast size. Mom immediately was able to increase the amount of breastmilk pumped for her baby by 20 ml! Baby is now home with mom and thriving with lots of breastmilk. Of course, Monique is checking on mom and baby regularly, and will continue to help her along her breastfeeding journey.

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#### Saeda Salim

May's Cheers for Peers goes to Saeda Salim. In just one year as a peer counselor, Saeda has mastered meeting WIC participants where they are. She has even come up with creative conversational games to get moms to think differently about their barriers to breastfeeding. Saeda also has the added bonus that she is fluent in Arabic. Saeda recently received a call from an Arabic-speaking WIC mom who received her contact information at a party from another WIC mom who encouraged her to reach out to Saeda for WIC and breastfeeding support. Word travels fast, especially amongst our WIC moms with language barriers!



**Saeda Salim**  
May 2022 Cheers for Peers

Saeda has built lasting connections with her moms, including one mom whom she's been speaking with for about a year now. Mom had many struggles with breastfeeding, even had to formula feed for a time, but with Saeda's support, mom and baby are 10 months breastfeeding strong. Saeda shared, "Even though they have graduated from the PC program, she still sends me bi-monthly pictures and updates on his milestones. Being her peer counselor and hearing her during her weakest points, and praising her during the strongest points in life turned us into mother sisters. Supporting each other in the best moments of life ..." Way to go, Saeda!

## Clinic Spotlight

Shining A Light On Clinic Success!

### Local WIC Clinics Participate in Community Outreach Events

By: LaNaya Carter, Program Monitor

Local WIC clinics participate in outreach events to ensure that families and communities are aware of WIC program benefits, eligibility criteria, and local clinic information. Outreach events are a great way to connect with potentially eligible families, and promote all of the valuable services that WIC provides.

Here are a few highlights from the field.

#### Region 1

Crescent City Family Services participated in a *Drive Thru Community Baby Shower* hosted by Amerihealth Caritas and Sista Midwife Productions. The event was held on March 26, 2022 in New Orleans.



#### Region 8

Ouachita Parish Health Unit's Nutrition Educators, Bonnie Tyler and Romona Reed, participate in the Town of Richwood's Health Education Fair on Thursday, March 24.



## Get To Know Your State Agency Team

By: LaNaya Carter, Program Monitor

Over the next few issues, we'll highlight members of the State Agency Team. We hope that you enjoy learning more about our awesome Louisiana WIC State Agency Team members.

### Barbara Cerniauskas, MIS and Training Manager

#### How long have you been with BONS?

I came on board in 2013 as the Nutrition Education manager. Upon the departure of the former training manager, I assumed that role. When we rolled out LAWIN, I became the MIS manager and now we have transitioned Nutrition Education to Celia Bridgeforth.

#### Share a brief description about your role.

I manage and test upcoming changes in LAWIN, participate in (lots of) meetings and collaborate with our other State Partners. As training manager, I develop periodic trainings for staff for policy changes, USDA mandates and changes, and changes in LAWIN. I also manage the new employee training modules, the WIC LMS (Learning Management System), and conduct WIC basics training for new employees.

#### What is your favorite part about working for Louisiana WIC?

I just love the passion that our staff have for our program. I love training new staff and letting them know how important they are to Louisiana families. Our program serves over 50% of Louisiana babies. That is a huge impact! Of course, when I visit clinics, I love seeing the families and the little ones. That always brightens my day! I'm looking forward to getting back to in-person training soon. I really enjoy interacting with new staff. Virtual WIC basics has been going well, but it's not the same.

#### What have you gained from working at Louisiana WIC?

I worked in research and diabetes for many years prior to coming to WIC. WIC has taught me so much about public health and I've learned so much about the LMS and LAWIN. There is constantly something new to learn, so there is always training to develop. I'm busy and very fulfilled. LAWIN rollout was the busiest I've ever been in my career. We trained every other week, and traveled all over the state. It was so great to see all of the staff, and to be able to assist in some of the clinics. Everyone worked so hard and did an awesome job! It's hard to believe that was three years ago!

#### Fun Fact

#### What's something you're planning on doing in the next year that you've never done?



Barbara Cerniauskas (3<sup>rd</sup> from left)  
MIS and Training Manager

Becoming an empty nester. My oldest son left last summer to go to college at West Point, and my youngest was just accepted and leaves in late June. I'm going to miss them both but look forward to adventures with my husband, Chris. We will certainly make our way up to West Point frequently for football games and other parent events!

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## **Tara Landry, WIC Breastfeeding Program Manager**

### **How long have you been with BONS?**

2 years, 9 months

### **Share a brief description about your role.**

As the WIC Breastfeeding Program Manager, I work toward making sure that all our WIC moms have the needed resources to successfully breastfeed (if they choose) by following the guidelines and policies set forth by the USDA. Understandably this is a broad definition and encompasses many aspects which include overseeing management of the BFPC Program, all breast pumps and accessories, staff policy compliance, staff trainings, breastfeeding education, innovative technology like Pacify and BFPC Monthly Virtual Support Group, etc. And this is all done being completely mindful of our WIC budget with an effort to be fiscally responsible and not wasteful.



**Tara Landry**  
*Breastfeeding Program Manager*

**What is your favorite part about working for Louisiana WIC?** Having worked as a nutritionist in the WIC clinics in Region 3 for 16 years prior to moving into State Agency, I still feel like those magic moments are the small victories we see each and every day with our WIC moms. I don't get to experience that much now that I am in State Agency, but I get to relive it daily with my awesome BFPC staff. I love hearing about their experiences in our bi-weekly Q&A sessions as they share their ups and downs, or during the monthly virtual support group with WIC participants, as they provide sound guidance and support to WIC moms. It is truly special and one of my favorite parts about working in WIC, seeing the difference all WIC staff can make for a WIC family.

**What have you gained from working at Louisiana WIC?** Gratitude. I have an overwhelming sense of appreciation and respect for how massive the WIC program is and the many different facets that all work together to make it function. Starting with the smallest of participants (baby in utero, essentially) all the way up to the State WIC Director, there are so many moving parts that are needed for the program to function successfully. At the end of the day, the most essential part is the health outcome of that baby in utero and I am so thankful to be a small part of that process.

### **Fun Fact**

#### **What was your first job?**

This will date me, but my first job was as a cashier at my local Winn-Dixie grocery store when I turned 16 years old. My uniform was this awful baby blue polyester bell bottom pants and wide-collared, button-down smock top with pockets and polished white SAS shoes (like my grandma would wear — yuck!). I remember coming home the first day of my training and telling my parents about these WIC checks that customers used to buy food items. I didn't even know what WIC stood for and neither did the cashier who trained me. I was told just to make sure to check the item's description and the quantity for accuracy before running the paper voucher through the cash checking system. I remember what stood out the most was all the canned juice and canned evaporated milk (which in hindsight I believe was actually baby formula) and wondering what they did with all that. It's funny how in life things come full circle ... little did I know at that time that WIC would be such an important part of my future.



## Staffing Updates

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### Welcome to the Team!



Cathy Daniels  
Evaluation and Policy Program  
Manager  
225-342-9059 (Office)  
[Cathy.Daniels@LA.GOV](mailto:Cathy.Daniels@LA.GOV)

Join us in welcoming **Cathy Daniels** to the State Agency Team. She serves as the Evaluation and Policy Program Manager, and will be housed in Baton Rouge (Bienville). Cathy is a Registered Dietitian with over 30 years' experience and has spent the last 21 years as Public Health Nutritionist in Region 2 working with both WIC and Children Special Health Services (CSHS). She is eager to get started and is very excited to be part of the BONS team!

## Announcements

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### Three-Month Issuance Returns

Beginning July 1, 2022 LA WIC will revert back to only issuing three months of benefits. Since March 2020 we have been issuing four months of benefits to provide participants more flexibility due to COVID-19. As businesses have opened back up and vaccine rates have risen, LA WIC is opting to return to normal issuance to best align with the certification appointments and nutrition education requirements. Note that we will still have the physical presence waiver, and clinics will still have the option of operating via curbside, in-person or a hybrid model. More information will be available for staff on the June 30 policy webinar, via the LMS, and a training bulletin.

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### Contribute to the Newsletter!

Clinic Lagniappe is the perfect place to share information. We want to know what is going on in your region and local clinic. If you're interested in submitting content for the newsletter, please email [Kate.Andrus@la.gov](mailto:Kate.Andrus@la.gov).

### Join Our Mailing List

This newsletter will automatically be sent to Regional Nutritionists to share with WIC Clinic Managers. WIC staff may also sign up to receive this newsletter directly by registering. If you would like to join the **WIC Clinic Lagniappe** mailing list, [click here](#).

### We Want Your Feedback!

We'd love to hear from you! Send us your thoughts, comments and suggestions. [CONTACT US](#)