

## Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

June 1, 2015

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### WIC: New Income Guidelines Released

**Coldwater, MI.** Some blame it on the drought in western states. Others blame it on the bird flu hitting the poultry industry. Still, others speculate it has to do with recent increases in the minimum wage. Regardless of the reasons, food prices are high and are expected to increase. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that the average monthly cost of feeding a family of four to be between \$568 to over \$1,100 per month, depending on how thrifty or liberal the family shops.

That's why the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's WIC Program is so important. WIC - which stands for Women, Infants and Children – is a supplemental food subsidy and nutrition education program which helps families with young children get the healthy foods they need. The program is free and can provide over \$40 dollars of healthy food per month, per participant into young families on a budget. According to Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director for the tri-county health department, "As of May 15th, even more people are eligible for WIC benefits and we encourage them to apply." Revised WIC income guidelines for families are listed below:

Family Size*	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$21,775	\$1,815	\$419
2	\$29,471	\$2,456	\$567
3	\$37,167	\$3,098	\$715
4	\$44,863	\$3,739	\$863
5	\$52,559	\$4,380	\$1,011

\*A pregnant woman is counted as 1, plus the number of infants expected.

The WIC Program is a public health nutrition program for pregnant women, new mothers, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to the age of 5 years old that is funded by the USDA.

WIC provides a monthly food package of healthy foods, foods your family will enjoy:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain cereals, breads, brown rice, and tortillas
- Low fat dairy products, including milk, cheeses, and eggs
- Formula, baby foods, including cereal, fruits, vegetables, and meats
- Canned fish, peanut butter and juices

“Research for 40 years has shown that WIC can contribute to positive development and health outcomes for women and children that participate,” said Steve Todd, Health Officer for the tri-county health department. “This includes healthier births, more nutritious diets, better preventive health care, and improved development.” For these reasons, the health department encourages parents to keep their children enrolled in the WIC program until their fifth birthday. Five reasons cited to keep children in WIC are:

- Children have better growth and development.
- WIC promotes healthy weight.
- Children are better prepared for school.
- WIC pays for milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, and other healthy foods.
- Eating better helps children focus and behave better.

To learn if your family is eligible for WIC services, call your county health department office or visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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