

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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New 2012 WIC Income Guidelines**

**Coldwater, MI.** The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency announces the release of new WIC income guidelines. These new income guidelines will expand the number of pregnant and nursing mothers and their infants eligible to receive the supplemental food and nutrition program offered at the tri-county health department. The new income guidelines were released by the United States Department of Agriculture and became effective in March, 2012.

The changes to the WIC income guidelines reflect adjustments that have been made by the federal government to the poverty threshold. These changes are expected to increase participation in the program. Jo Ann Wilczynski, Prevention Services Director, states "The revised income levels will make more pregnant women and their young families eligible for our program. Currently, we have a caseload of 5,700. With this increase, we hope to enroll more families who may not have been eligible before but who would definitely benefit from the added nutritional support." Families who meet program criteria and are at 185% of poverty are eligible for the program. Jo Ann Wilczynski added "This means that a family of four making up to \$42,643 is eligible."

WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children. It is a supplemental food and nutrition program offered by the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency. It is designed to correct or prevent poor nutrition in pregnant, postpartum or breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at risk for poor health. WIC provides supplemental food, offers professional nutrition education, and makes referrals based on health screening and assessments of need. WIC helps pregnant women get timely prenatal care and improves pregnancy outcomes by providing needed support services.

WIC participation improves the diet of pregnant women and improves the length of pregnancy and infant birth weight. WIC participation also reduces infant death by reducing the incidence of low birth weight infants (under 5.5 lbs).

“With the new electronic benefit card, purchasing WIC approved food is fast and easy.” says Kim Brown, WIC Coordinator for the health department. “The food selections have been expanded and now include things like tuna fish and tortilla shells, as well as formula, cereal, milk and juice. In addition, by using their WIC benefits, participants can save up to \$112 on their monthly food bill, while assuring that their families are receiving more nutritious foods.” Kim Brown went on to state “Accessing services is even more convenient since the opening of the Sturgis Satellite Clinic.”

Eligible WIC participants are:

- Pregnant, breastfeeding or have recently had a baby, or have infants from birth to 12 months, and/or children up to age 5 years who are residents of Michigan. (US citizenship is not required)
- Screened for nutritional and health risks which can be improved by better nutrition.
- Income eligible using the following revised income guidelines:

Family Size*	Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$9.94	\$398	\$1,723	\$20,665
2	\$13.46	\$539	\$2,333	\$27,991
3	\$16.98	\$680	\$2,944	\$35,317
4	\$20.51	\$821	\$3,554	\$42,643
5	\$24.03	\$961	\$4,165	\$49,969
6	\$27.55	\$1,102	\$4,775	\$57,295
7	\$31.07	\$1,243	\$5,386	\$64,621
For additional family members add:				
	\$3.52	\$141	\$611	\$7,326

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

WIC is free of charge and is an excellent way to keep mother and baby healthy during this important developmental time in life. If you have any questions about WIC and whether or not you are eligible, feel free to contact any one of the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offices, or visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).  
County office locations for the tri-county health department are as follows:

- Branch County Office – 570 N. Marshall Road, Coldwater, MI – 517-279-9561
- Hillsdale County Office – 20 Care Drive, Hillsdale, MI – 517-437-7395
- St. Joseph County Office – 1110 Hill Street, Three Rivers, MI – 269-273-2161
- Sturgis WIC Satellite Clinic (select Fridays only) – 306 Nottawa, Sturgis MI – 269-273-2161 (call ahead for an appointment)

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