

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

**October 28, 2014**

**Steve Todd, Health Officer**

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**Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WIC: Cutting the Fat Out of Your Diet and Budget!**

**(Coldwater, MI)** The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency would like you to know.... WIC cuts the fat out of your diet and your budget! Now moms and children, ages 2 to 5 years, can receive the same amount of vitamin D, calcium and protein as before, but without the excess fat and calories. Effective September 15th, Michigan WIC changed their food package for pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding women and their children 2 years and older. The change replaces 2% milk with skim, ½% and 1% milk.

According to Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director “This change better aligns the WIC program with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Like other federal programs, such as Head Start, and the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, we will offer only skim, ½% or 1% percent milk. The change may seem small, but we know that, overtime, these small changes can impact the obesity problem we are seeing in our state.” It’s estimated that 30% of Michigan’s children are either overweight or obese.

Families can help prevent future weight problems for their children now by helping them to adopt healthy eating habits. Kim states “We are proud to say that in our WIC program, we have seen decreases in the percentage of children that are overweight or obese for both 2012 and 2013. We believe that this decline is attributed to changes made to the WIC food package in 2009. We also believe that by changing the fat content of the milk offered through the program, we will continue the trend.”

Steve Todd, Health Officer adds “One percent and nonfat milk have the same nutrients as 2 percent and whole milk; the only difference is the amount of fat. One percent and nonfat milk have less calories and cholesterol. We understand that this will be new for some families, but we’re giving lots of support and information to help them make the change.” Children ages 1 to 2 will get whole milk, along with women and children who are prescribed 2 percent or whole milk by their health care provider.

WIC stands for Women, Infants and Children program and is a supplemental food and nutrition program that is free of charge for participants. 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. To learn more about the WIC program and to find out if you are eligible, just contact the health department or visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org). WIC is an equal opportunity provider.

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