

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

June 28, 2016

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New 2016 WIC Income Guidelines

Coldwater, MI. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has released its 2016 WIC Income Guidelines. Effective July 1st, these new income guidelines increase the income eligibility threshold so that more women, infants and children can receive healthy WIC foods. Now, a family of four can make an annual income up to \$44,955 and qualify for WIC. This equates to an hourly wage of \$21.61.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is encouraging pregnant and post-partum women, breastfeeding women and families with children up to age five years to sign up for WIC. Val Newton, Prevention Services Director for the Health Department, says “WIC food options are continually expanding. WIC participants may use their benefits to receive free milk, cheese, eggs, juices rich in Vitamin C, cereals rich in iron, and dry peas/beans or peanut butter, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads or tortillas. Beginning July 11th, the list will expand to include, whole wheat pasta and yogurt. All these foods are nutritious, rich in vitamins and minerals and are essential for growing bodies.”

Studies have shown that families who participate in WIC can save anywhere between \$30 to \$112 in their monthly grocery bill by utilizing their benefits. Val goes on to say “In addition to the excellent food selection available through WIC, the savings to a monthly grocery bill are tremendous. Furthermore, WIC participants receive so much more in terms of referrals to other important Health Department services.” For example:

- Women without health insurance can receive in-person assistance in enrolling in Medicaid or other health insurance programs through the Marketplace.

- Children are screened and, if needed, can receive immunizations at their appointment.
- Children less than three years can receive fluoride varnishes that help prevent tooth decay on newly erupting teeth.
- Infants and children can receive a car seat check, and if needed a new car seat.

“All of these services are available to eligible WIC participants, free of charge” Val adds.

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. The program 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 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).

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:

WIC INCOME GUIDELINES - 2016

Family Size*	Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1	\$10.56	\$423	\$1,832	\$21,978
2	\$14.24	\$570	\$2,470	\$29,637
3	\$17.93	\$718	\$3,108	\$37,296
4	\$21.61	\$865	\$3,747	\$44,955
5	\$25.29	\$1,012	\$4,385	\$52,614
6	\$28.97	\$1,160	\$5,023	\$60,273

7	\$32.66	\$1,307	\$5,663	\$67,951
For additional family members add:				
	\$3.70	\$148	\$642	\$7,696

*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. To receive meal planning tips for WIC foods, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic.

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