New Year —
New Clients

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
As we celebrate the arrival of 2018, we look forward to new accomplishments and initiatives. We also reflect back on our successes and challenges of the past year with an eye on how to keep the ball rolling.

Hurricane Harvey forced us to focus our efforts and respond without hesitation. We quickly put aside our preconceived limitations and started to think creatively. We did this because there was no other option, no fail safe plan, no safety net. When decisive action was necessary, local agency leadership rose to the challenge.

The January/February issue of the Texas WIC News takes a look at both new and existing WIC initiatives. This year, we roll out TXIN, the newly developed client records and benefit issuance management system. The new system promises to simplify our information collection and retrieval, but will not come without significant obstacles and setbacks that require the same level of decisive leadership. Read about “TXIN Over Time: By the Numbers,” a brief view of the accomplishments during the past year, on page 6.

Outreach is an equally important focus. Connecting eligible participants with education, support, and food benefits has a profound and lasting effect on health. While WIC infants and children are only covered through the age of 5, studies show that the health benefits from establishing good eating habits and nutrition during those developmental years may have the greatest impact on their long term health. On page 4 we discuss the E3 Outreach initiative with the goal to empower, engage and enroll, a comprehensive outreach strategy involving activities at the local agency level.

It is important to keep our focus narrow this year. Too many initiatives would mean poor attention to the ones that really matter. As always, keep participant experience in mind. They are the reason we exist. You can find out more about our youngest mom participants in the article titled “Generation Z– Their Beliefs and work Ethics” on page 16. Understanding the characteristics of each generation helps us relate to people in other generations whether they are participants or coworkers.

From the desk of Edgar Curtis — Texas WIC Director
in this issue

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TEXAS WIC NEWS SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
If you have a story idea you would like to submit for consideration in the Texas WIC News please send an email to Melanie-Smith@hhsc.state.tx.us.

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Outreach for You and Me

by Melanie Smith
Communication Strategist

The power of outreach can be seen in this testimonial…

“I am so happy that you contacted me because I am sick and tired of eating ramen noodles each and every day. I am very excited and looking forward to the foods that WIC has to offer!”

The quote above came from a woman UTMB Health System called from the Health and Human Services Commission file. It is an example of WIC having a significant impact on someone’s life. An outreach opportunity that may have been missed had the local agency not picked up the phone.

We know the value of WIC, but not everyone does, and outreach can change that. That is one of the reasons we started the E3 outreach initiative in Summer 2017. The goal was to empower staff to engage partners and participants in the community to increase enrollment.

The initiative was a comprehensive outreach strategy that involved several activities at the local agency level, collaborations and partnerships at the state level, and digital campaigns.

Several agencies saw increases in new client participation and 63 percent of local agency staff who took the post-E3 survey said they learned something new.

As we begin 2018, we will be launching round three of this initiative.
Digital Outreach

The state agency will continue to explore all digital outreach opportunities and encourages local agencies to do so as well. If we want to recruit clients, we have to go where they are. Marketing experts recommend using technology to market to millennials and generation Z. The state agency will maximize our usage of social media and other digital advertising options.

Media

From mock grocery stores to the summer food service program and peer dads, Texas WIC local agencies were featured in several news media outlets. Coverage of the benefits WIC provides helps promote WIC’s brand as a partner. The state agency will continue to push for news outlets to cover WIC events and initiatives.

Community Events

Through conferences, the state agency is seeing a lot of success in debunking myths about WIC and getting more potential partners interested in the program. The state agency will continue to find and attend conferences where we can market the WIC program to health care providers, and other wellness advocates. We encourage local agencies to ensure they are aware of and attend conferences that may be beneficial to their goals.

Messaging

Texas WIC will also explore new messages to market the program. These messages will target common misconceptions about WIC to interest more potential clients to the program. One idea is calling out fathers, grandparents, foster parents and others caregivers who believe they cannot enroll in WIC. We will also make sure the messages we take to conferences and other events are tailored to that audience.

Our mission is to improve the health of low income women, infants, and children up to age 5, and as part of that mission, we have a responsibility to make it clear why health should be a priority in Texans’ lives and the lives of their families. We also have a responsibility to correct the record and clarify misinformation. By doing both in our outreach efforts, we can increase enrollment, and better position WIC as the nutrition experts we know we are.
Happy New Year!

We have finally begun the most important part of the TXIN project: rollout and implementation! As we look forward to all the improvements, changes, and challenges that come with TXIN, take a look back at our progress over the past year. Let's look at some numbers to help quantify all that we have accomplished together.

1 NBF Presentation and Exhibit Hall Booth: A mixed bag of Service Desk, Training, IT, and TXIN staff collaborated on a first-of-its-kind TXIN exhibit hall booth at this year's Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference. We showed live demos of both TXIN and the Service Desk systems, and answered a myriad of questions.

9 Local Agencies: As of January 1, nine local agencies are officially live on TXIN!!

- LA 1: Austin / Travis County Health and Human Services Dept.
- LA 22: Waco-McLennan County Public Health District
- LA 36: City of San Marcos
- LA 42: Williamson County and Cities Health District
- LA 43: Community Health Center of South Central Texas (Gonzalez)
- LA 74: Brownwood-Brown County Health Department
- LA 110: Tejas Health Care Center
- LA 126: Faith Mission and Help Center
- LA 132: Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.
TALWD Board, Regional, and Annual Meetings: Last year, members of the TXIN team attended, presented to and listened at seven regional, three board, and the Annual TALWD meetings. These meetings provide priceless opportunities for the team to connect with LA directors — to provide answers, solicit feedback, and check in. TALWD’s input in this process has been invaluable, and we are grateful for the continued collaboration.

300+ Staff Trained: More than 300 state and local staff have been fully trained on TXIN!

LA Webinars: In addition to the standing monthly webinars, the TXIN team hosted stand-alone, specialty webinars focused on things like IT support, technology changes, and rollout preparation.

2,750+ Testing Hours: State and local staff came together in the testing bed at WIC state headquarters on Howard Lane to test the system before it went live, diligently trudging their way through more than 800 test cases covering every aspect of TXIN functionality.

9,036 Cups of Coffee: How much caffeine the TXIN team (state staff + vendors) drank in 2017 (estimated).

11,000 Square Miles: The TXIN system covers participants and LAs in more than 11,000 square miles.

800,000 (ish) Participants: Texas families who will have an improved customer experience and receive benefits faster, not just because of TXIN but because of the work that you do day after day, and not just in 2017, but year after year.

Now that we have looked back at the past year, you might be asking yourself “Well gee, that’s great, but what’s coming up in 2018?” The answer: A lot! We are ramping up rollout throughout the spring, with the last agency expected to rollout in late spring or early summer. Stay tuned to Texas WIC News and the monthly WIC Director webinars for more information, and contact TXIN@hhsc.state.tx.us with any questions. Happy New System everyone!
Texas WIC innovation centers are proving they are up to the challenge to reinvent the traditional WIC experience. Innovation centers were launched in January 2016 after clinics from across the state applied for this unique opportunity. Three clinic sites were selected to serve as “pilots” and collaborators for new ideas and evaluation.

In addition to testing a new emotion-based approach called Heart Buttons, the clinics have taken on their own ideas to spur innovation.

Innovation leads from each site share their first-hand experiences to inspire change in their respective clinics. Read on to hear Stephanie’s approach to staff motivation, Lisa’s view on client-centered clinic flow, and Arria’s role in clinic renovations. Their stories can be a resource for your own innovation!

Innovation in Motivation

As an innovation center, change has been the focal point for our agency over the past two years. We’ve changed our furniture, the way we counsel, our clinic flow and most importantly, we’ve changed the focus leadership has on staff motivation. Throughout our transitions the biggest value we have learned is that every employee is different, and responds differently to motivation. Using a ‘Tell Us about You’ questionnaire, our leadership was able to gain personalized insight into how to encourage and engage our staff. Three major areas of motivation emerged: challenge, encouragement, and discussion.

CHALLENGE: Invite employees to change the world.
This past year we applied a short mission statement for our agency: Empower, Connect, Inspire. This common goal has helped us to foster an environment where we are all working toward the same purpose which gave us a firm foundation to manage the difficult changes. Most recently we challenged our clerical staff to increase our social media presence, and the clerk who obtained the most participant ‘Likes’ to our social media pages received a personalized prize.

ENCOURAGEMENT: The action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope.
Management has applied two habits to inspire employees. The first is personal hand-written notes that include a name badge sticker recognizing those who have gone above and beyond their required job description. Second, weekly ‘Thoughtful Tuesday’ emails to staff offer practical tips or inspirational messages to keep the focus and momentum with current projects. Peer-to-peer encouragement was also important to staff. The weekly passing of the ‘Heart Button Lanyard’ from an employee to a coworker who displayed the characteristics of a ‘Full Heart’ fosters this peer-to-peer recognition.

DISCUSSION: Talking about something, in order to reach a decision or exchange ideas.
Sometimes you have to talk through the mess, so why not have a little fun in doing so? Quarterly events like our ‘Whine & Cheese Party’ provide staff a safe time to openly whine about changes they are having difficulty with and
to celebrate what is going well. Discussion also takes place at monthly staff meetings where time is dedicated to job title specific tasks, policies and procedures. Clerical staff and nutritionists meet with their like groups allowing employees to solve problems as a team, fostering self-efficacy within their job and ownership of their work.

This past year has had its share of successes and failures, but no matter the challenge we have been able to use one of the three areas to prepare staff, support them through the mess in the middle, and celebrate the beauty at the end.

Local Agency 132, Clinic 01
BRAZOS VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.
Written by Lisa Johnson, Certified WIC Certification Specialist, Interim Innovation Lead, while Jessica McKee, Innovation Lead, is on maternity leave.

The Power of Influence, Heart Buttons and Client Centered Clinic Flow: Merging Them Together

Following the values from the Power of Influence training, we began to ponder the questions, “How do we merge the principles of influence and Heart Button counseling to provide the greatest impact?” and “How do we ensure that when the client leaves the clinic they are leaving with a Neiman Marcus experience?”

The first step was to observe the clinic operations. Hospitality was our priority. The manner in which staff were greeting clients was good — but we wanted GREAT. Our clinic manager took a hands-on approach and modeled her expectation for providing the wow factor we were striving for. It didn’t take long and we were off and running.

The culture of the clinic was changing. Was this change in culture enough to encourage and support the life changes we were hoping to see in our clients? We didn’t know.

The second step was to observe our clinic flow and we realized that our clients’ valuable resource of time was not being fully respected. Our clients were being moved numerous times: reception, eligibility, waiting room #2, nutrition counseling, benefits issuance and finally out of the clinic. Imagine moms with heavy car seats, diaper bags, strollers, family and friends making all of those transitions. How did we miss this and how were we going to stop this mad shuffle of people and things?

Everyone quickly began to work on developing a new clinic flow that was client centered. We would go to the client and not the client to us. We removed two transitions from our process — it had to be better.

After the change, we spoke with clients about the flow. To our surprise, the clients’ perception was that the visit was taking longer and it was confusing to have so many different staff members coming and going.

We found ourselves back at the drawing board once again, but we were determined to keep trying until we conquered the challenge of clinic flow and created our Neiman Marcus experience. There have been two more clinic flow attempts and a third is on the horizon. Regardless of how many times we have to change the clinic flow, evaluate, and change again, we remain determined. We continuously strive to improve our clinic flow for the benefit of our guest experience at WIC in (Continued on page 10)
Innovation Centers
(continued from page 9)

addition to providing them the tools to make behavior changes that will impact the rest of their lives. The freedom to make mistakes is the key to innovation.

Local Agency 007, Clinic 25
CITY OF DALLAS
WRITTEN BY: ARRIA ANDREWS, RD LD, INNOVATION CENTER LEAD

First Impressions: How Your Physical Space Can Change the Culture

From the moment moms enter our doors, they are looking forward to receiving great customer service, a hospitable environment, information regarding their amazing children, a feeling of importance, and an inviting experience. As an innovation center, we wanted to create an environment that was new, refreshing, and vibrant. A place where every mom felt that she and her child were valued.

Our very first change was expanding our classroom and the introduction of Heart Buttons. This innovative form of counseling allows staff and moms to interact on a more personal and emotional level, and to identify their emotional drivers that motivate them to reinvent a better life for their families. The more we used Heart Buttons with our clients, the more positive feedback we received. We then realized, because our clients were receptive to Heart Button counseling, we should establish a “Heart Button Culture” for the entire clinic.

Although Heart Buttons was a success and we had an awesome classroom, we still needed something more to create that hospitable environment. After discussing new ideas with Pam McCarthy, public health consultant, we created a list of clinic updates to achieve this new vision. We wanted to make small yet powerful changes to our innovation center that were reasonable and cost friendly.

We made changes such as:
• Placing planters with flowers and greenery and a welcome mat outside the front door.
• A larger welcome sign.
• Signage in the front waiting area with the phrases “Check in Here,” “We Were Happy to Serve You Today,” and “Thank you for Choosing WIC.”
• Vibrant multicultural canvas photos of parents and their children in the reception area.
• Rearranged seating and toys.
• Comfortable cushioned chairs for clients.
• Colored clip boards with decorative pens attached.
• Bright colored T-shirts with “We Serve Hero Moms” printed on the back.
• Repainted the lower half of the front desk as staff and their children were amazing enough to lend us imprints of their hands in paint with a variety of different colors.
• Met with staff to address ways to improve overall customer service.

We pulled together as a team and made changes in only one month. There was an immediate shift in the atmosphere once we completed our vision. Throughout this process we displayed dedication, teamwork, flexibility, and commitment. We officially felt like an innovation center. Our clients compliment us daily as they enjoy the relaxed and welcoming environment we created just for them.
Sticking to Your Resolution

Contributed by Katie Oliver MS, RD, LD WIC Wellness Works Coordinator

The start of the new year can mean a lot of different things to people. More often than not, it means making a New Year’s resolution. Many people will reflect on their past year’s behavior and promise to make some sort of positive lifestyle change. Keeping these promises can be hard, especially when we make resolutions that are unrealistic. Following a few simple guidelines, we can make resolutions that we can keep and will improve our lives.

Start small and manageable. Scheduling small steps towards a goal is one key to success. If you are trying to increase the amount you exercise, make it a goal to schedule three to four workouts a week instead of seven a week. If eating healthier is your end game, you can start by replacing dessert with something you already like, such as fruit or yogurt.

Change one bad habit at a time. Unhealthy behaviors develop over time and replacing them can take just as much time. Often you let yourself get overwhelmed by trying to tackle too many behaviors at once. Focus on one activity that you can change and then when you get into a better pattern with that behavior, you can add another goal.

Helpful Tip

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. While there are plenty of variants, SMART usually stands for:

S – Specific (or Significant).
M – Measurable (or Meaningful).
A – Attainable (or Action-Oriented).
R – Relevant (or Rewarding).
T – Time-bound (or Trackable).

For example, instead of, “I am going to eat healthier in 2018.” a SMART goal would be, “I am going to replace my dessert with yogurt or fruit 5 out of 7 nights a week.”

Make it public. Talk about the new resolution, and share struggles and accomplishments with friends and family. This helps keep you accountable and on track to reaching your goal. Many people also find it helpful to join a support group which may just be a friend who works out with you or a workout class you can join.

Don’t be too hard on yourself. It is normal to have missteps along the way to reaching goals. The important thing to remember is that even if you did not make it to the gym this week or you had a pizza and brownies, and then had them again, you have not ruined everything. Refocus on what the ultimate goal is, start again the next day, and know that it will probably happen again and that’s ok.
Ease Up on Empty Calories
Contributed by Krissy Lines, Texas State University Dietetic Intern

What are Empty Calories?
"Empty calories" is a term used for foods or drinks that provide lots of calories with little nutrition, and they can contribute to weight gain and poor health. Foods that are mostly empty calories are often high in unhealthy fats (i.e. saturated and trans fats) and/or added sugars, yet low in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. So, eating empty calories means that we don’t get the nutrients we need to support good health. Most of us eat empty calories without knowing it, since they are common in drinks, sauces and dressings, snacks and dessert foods.

How to Find Empty Calorie Foods
Unfortunately, empty calories are not listed as an item on nutrition facts labels. But, with a little education about food labels, we can choose foods that are better choices. First, look for foods with little to no saturated or trans fats (listed under total fat on the nutrition facts label). Also, check the ingredient list of the nutrition facts label to find disguised added fats and sugars in foods that we may not know are there. For example, tricky names for fats include hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils and lard. Added sugars may be called corn syrup, fructose, dextrose, maltose, or nectar.

Choose food and beverage items with:
0 grams trans fat
Less than 5 grams saturated fat
No added sugars on the ingredient list

Replace Empty Calories with Healthier Food and Drinks
Limiting empty calories is healthy for a number of reasons. First, limiting empty calorie foods can help individuals achieve healthy eating patterns within their calorie limits. Eating excess calories increases the risk for obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming less than 10% of calories from added sugars and less than 10% of calories from saturated fats. The American Heart Association goes further to recommend women consume no more than 100 calories, and men no more than 150 calories of added sugars each day. The take home message - less sugar is better!

Second, eating less empty calories means more room to eat nutrient-dense foods. Nutrient-dense foods have more fiber, vitamins and minerals. Examples include whole grains (i.e. fiber) and fresh fruits (i.e. vitamin C). Nutrient-dense foods also help us feel full after eating.

(Continued on WWW — Insert D)
Turkey and Veggie Chili

This chili is an easy and tasty one pot dish that is sure to please the whole family on a cold day.
Serves 8

**Ingredients:**
- Cooking spray
- 1 small onion
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 medium zucchini (6 ounces), diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 16 ounces lean ground turkey
- 1 14.5-ounce can, no salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 28-ounce can, no salt added crushed tomatoes
- 1 15.8-ounce can great Northern Beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15.25-ounce can no salt added kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

**Preparation:**
Spray a large soup pot with cooking spray. Add the onions, carrots, and zucchini, and sauté over medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes or until the onions turn clear. Add the garlic and sauté for 30 more seconds. Add the ground turkey and cook until brown. Add the remaining ingredients, mix well and bring the chili to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

**Nutrition Information Per Serving: (1 cup)**
- 235 calories, 5 g total fat (1.2 g saturated fat), 45 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium, 27 g carbohydrates (8 g dietary fiber), 20 g protein

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**Texas Seasonal Produce**

**Fruits:**
- Grapefruit, oranges

**Vegetables:**
- Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, mushrooms, kale, kohlrabi, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, greenhouse tomatoes, turnips
Ease Up on Empty Calories
(Continued from WWW — Insert B)

We can limit empty calories by learning where they are in foods and drinks, then, what items to replace them with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of these:</th>
<th>Try these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drinks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular sodas</td>
<td>Unsweetened tea or coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetened teas</td>
<td>Water with lemon or lime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruit drinks (i.e. fruit punch)</td>
<td>Sugar-free drinks (i.e. Crystal Light, seltzer water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemonade</td>
<td>Carbonated flavored water (check ingredient list for no added sugars)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetened coffee (Frappuccino, and flavored coffee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drinks</td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy drinks</td>
<td>Popcorn (free of butter/added fat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruits (raspberries, grapes, apple slices, kiwi)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetables (sugar snap peas, baby carrots, edamame, cherry tomatoes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plain nuts (almonds, pistachios, walnuts)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Condiments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato chips</td>
<td>Vinaigrette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Lemon juice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cake/cookies/pie</td>
<td>Herbs and spices (basil, thyme, cayenne pepper, garlic and onion powder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice cream</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Condiments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creamy salad dressings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sauces (i.e. barbeque sauce, mayo, cheese spreads, “special sauces”)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of course, it isn't realistic to avoid all empty calorie items. Instead it is helpful to make a plan for when, and when not to have them. Below are some helpful tips.
- Choose only one empty calorie item to enjoy each day.
- Eat more nutrient-dense foods before parties or eating out.
- Know how much you're eating by measuring your foods (serving sizes found on the nutrition fact label).
- Try not to let yourself get too hungry. This is likely to lead to binge-eating empty calorie temptations.

Resources:

Share your wellness success stories for a chance to be spotlighted in Texas WIC News and inspire other WIC staff! Contact your State Wellness Coordinator, Katie Oliver, at Katie.Oliver@hhsc.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4596.
IRM: Why We Love Our Job

by Olga Mikheeva, IRM Program Supervisor and Janete Olague, Program Specialist III, EBT Complaint Resolution Coordinator

What Is IRM?
The Information Response Management group (IRM) of the Nutrition Education and Clinic Services Unit provides guidance and technical assistance to Texas WIC clients and local and state agency staff. The IRM team provides front line customer service as the first point of contact for potential clients. The goal of IRM is to provide excellent customer service to every caller on the 1-800-WIC-FORU, main line and policy line.

What Does IRM do?
The IRM group consists of 17 members: 1-800-WIC-FORU operators, policy liaisons, training specialists, and customer service representatives. The operators provide customer service to the general public and WIC applicants. They also disable WIC cards and make referrals to various organizations. Policy liaisons interpret WIC policies and provide support to local agency staff, Texas WIC clients, the general public, and organizations. Training Specialists help resolve client disputes, and monitor and report dual participation and fraud or abuse to the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Training Specialists also provide local agency staff with more than 15 trainings on a variety of topics. Customer service representatives provide certification information for Texas WIC clients transferring to other states. IRM’s mission is to make a difference in clients’ lives every single day. Each member of the IRM team makes a significant contribution. The IRM team is proud to be part of such an amazing program as Texas WIC.

(Continued on page 12)

“Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.”
— Steve Jobs

Meet the IRM Team

Olga Mikheeva

There are many things that I love about my job, but let me tell you a little bit about myself. I graduated from the University of Houston with a degree in Human Nutrition and Foods. I joined Texas WIC in 2010 at the Matagorda County WIC Clinic (LA 60). My WIC experience continued as a clinic supervisor and nutritionist with the Northeast Texas Public Health District (LA 39). I watched many Texas WIC babies grow up, and I absolutely loved providing nutrition counseling and connecting with all the parents and guardians. Last year, I was offered the opportunity to become the IRM program supervisor at the state agency. It was exciting, but also a bittersweet moment for me and many others when I chose to move on with my career. Working at the state agency is truly an adventure. I love the work environment and camaraderie with co-workers. I love being a part of something larger that makes a difference. I love that everyone cares, and that you have flexibility when needed. I love my job because no day is ever the same. Each day I am presented with new challenges and situations, which provide many opportunities for professional growth. I LOVE my job because it is not just a job to me.

Karla Mendez

I have been part of the WIC program for nine years. I was a 1-800-WIC-FORU operator for almost five years. I got to talk to clients all the time to help them, guide them, and answer any questions about the program and what it offers. Now as a policy liaison, I get to assist staff on policies and/or procedures. I truly enjoy it when I am able to provide guidance that can be used now and in the future.

Jessica Wences

I’ve been part of the state WIC program for almost eight years as an IRM operator. I love my job because I get to work with caring individuals who strive to give excellent customer service to our clients. I have worked at other jobs and this is the only one where it feels like I’m working in a family environment.

Anna Jimenez

I have worked at other places and can tell you there is a huge difference working in IRM. We are united in a special way. Our team just seems to “click,” and we share a mutual respect and love for one another. I consider my work team a part of my family. We have been through some very tough personal and work-related challenges together. We help support each other with comforting words, a warm smile, and LOTS of good food. Working on the phones makes our days very interesting. We have those memorable calls that touch our heart and reaffirm the impact our services provide to families throughout the state. In April, I will be celebrating seven years of service with the WIC program.

Erika Garcia

I’ve been part of state WIC for almost three years and I love my job. My goal as an IRM operator is to provide outstanding customer service. I enjoy and appreciate assisting WIC clients and staff. It’s rewarding and important to me to provide them with professional and quality customer service. I also enjoy referring clients to helpful programs. One call in particular made an impact on me. The client could not get a replacement card for six days, and had no funds to feed her child. I referred the client to a food pantry. The client was very grateful and appreciative.

Anita Cavazos

I love my job at Texas WIC. Serving as part of the Texas WIC family for over ten years has given me the opportunity to expand my program knowledge and learn how nutrition plays a role in our lives. Working at the clinic level brought much interaction with clients through screening for eligibility and community outreach, and participating in cooking classes. The experience I gained at the clinic level led me to the state level as a program operator (1-800-WIC-FORU) interacting with current, former, and potential clients. I continue to serve WIC as a policy liaison, receiving calls from clinic staff seeking guidance in interpreting the program’s policies and procedures. In IRM each call is different from the last. I am always ready to provide a response to clinic staff, knowing they are serving our clients. I do not feel in any way that what I do is just a job, it is a dear part of my daily life. I have found so much more working for WIC – family, friends, love, and the opportunity to learn and make a difference. I am truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful place, and to work side-by-side with such loving and caring people.
Raul Rodriguez, Jr.

I joined WIC as an operator for the 1-800-WIC-FORU line in the fall of 1999. After a few years as an operator, I became an IRM policy liaison, and have enjoyed serving in this position since. There are five reasons I love my job. One, the good people and management that I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with. Two, local agency directors and clinic staff that I love serving each day. Three, our great clients. Without them there would be no WIC program. Four, the program’s rich history and its goals to grow in order to best serve the needs of our staff and clients through technology and education. Five, because I look into the future with knowledge that this program continues to serve the need of present and future generations in promoting proper nutrition and services to promote healthy lifestyles. It all leads to great health of mind and body, and overall healthier communities.

Ruby Montiel

I grew up with WIC. My mom, Lety Lopez, Director for LA 03 in Cameron County, took me to work with her on “Take your daughter to work day.” That was my first WIC experience. It was amazing to see my mom do her job with a smile. She was always willing to go the extra mile to help people. She genuinely enjoyed doing her job. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would follow in my mom’s footsteps and work for WIC. Obviously, she left some big shoes to fill when she retired after 24½ years. I love working at WIC because I know how much joy it brought my mom. Now, thankfully, I get to enjoy that experience as well as a member of the IRM team. Even though we are not at a clinic level, at IRM talking to clients is what we do on a daily basis. It is genuinely gratifying to hear stories about how much the WIC program has changed clients’ lives for the better. And, that is why I LOVE MY JOB!

Cynthia Ramirez

I have been a member of the WIC program for more than six years. I really enjoyed helping the people of Texas while I was working in the clinic as a clerk, and then as a breastfeeding peer counselor. I also was a client when I had my second child, so I have been on both sides of the program. Now, as an IRM operator, I enjoy learning many different services the WIC program has to offer to so many Texas families. A little bit about me, I have two boys. Jay is a freshman at Texas State University majoring in music. Julian is a seventh grader who is also in marching band and jazz band. As a parent, I was very involved in the band program and served as the vice president for two years.

Gloria Navarro

I have been working for WIC about six years. These years have been very exciting. I have met so many people over the phone. Every day is different than the one before. Each client, each call, can make your day or not. Helping these clients the best way I can makes me feel that I made a small difference in their lives and helped make life a little less stressful for them. We do the best we can, and try to be the best we can. We are always one big family trying to make our WIC program the best we can. I am sure that there are still a lot of things yet to learn, and I am here to keep doing it the best way I can.

Janete Olague

I have been a part of the Texas WIC program for 10 years. I began my WIC career at Williamson County (LA 42), and then as an IRM program specialist for the state agency. During these years of service I found each day challenging — in a good way, because every day brings something new. The WIC environment is one that is family and team-oriented. Each employee must be one with those they provide service. I am delighted to say that I support breastfeeding in my line of work, and in my personal life. My children have been exclusively breastfed for at least their first year of life which has resulted in them being healthy, strong, and happy. Without the support of this great program, and supportive work family, my success in breastfeeding would not have been possible. One of the rewards of working for this program is the great feeling of knowing that I have made a difference in the lives of our clients, clinic staff, and my loved ones. I love my job for all these reasons and more, and look forward to what the future holds.

Rosa Leal

I have been with the state WIC program for four years as an IRM operator. What I love about my job is that I get to work with such a wonderful team. They are caring, supportive, and amazing. I love that everyone is always willing to help each other out. We’ve shared many fun memories and great potlucks together. The members of my team are not just my co-workers, they are more like family.
The FODMAP Diet

by Faith Njoroge, MS
Breastfeeding Education Consultant
and
Angela Gil, RD, LD
Manager, Publishing,
Promotion and Media Services

What is a FODMAP?

There is a new diet you may have heard about. It is called the FODMAP diet. It has little to do with an area of land or sea showing physical features, cities or roads. Rather, it could help us navigate the gastrointestinal problems clients may have.

The term FODMAP is an acronym referring to Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols.

FODMAPs are a collection of short-chain carbohydrates and sugar alcohols found in foods naturally or as food additives. FODMAPs include fructose (when in excess of glucose), fructans, galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS), lactose and polyols (e.g. sorbitol and mannitol).

These short-chain carbohydrates are poorly absorbed which can mean serious trouble for people with gastrointestinal issues like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). IBS is a chronic gastrointestinal (GI) disorder characterized by a group of symptoms including pain or discomfort in the abdomen and changes in bowel movement patterns such as constipation, diarrhea, or both. The exact cause of IBS is unknown.

When foods high in FODMAPs are consumed, they can be poorly absorbed in the small intestine and pass through to the large intestine. There, the FODMAPs are readily fermented by bacteria in the large bowel, contributing to the production of gas. FODMAPs are also highly osmotic, meaning that they attract water into the large bowel, which can change how quickly the bowels move.

These two processes can then trigger symptoms including excess gas, abdominal bloating and distension, abdominal pain, constipation or diarrhea, or a combination of both. So you can see how foods high in FODMAPs can be a problem for someone with GI issues like IBS.

The main goal for clinicians treating patients with IBS is to alleviate the GI symptoms but this can be challenging since there are many. Treatment generally involves a combination of diet therapy, probiotics, medicines such as bulking agents, anticholinergics, antidiarrheals and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Not all FODMAPs will trigger symptoms in someone with IBS but by managing the consumption of these foods, someone can significantly reduce or eliminate their IBS symptoms.

What is a low FODMAP diet?

A low FODMAP diet, or FODMAP elimination diet, is a temporary eating pattern that restricts high FODMAPs from the diet. There are no official guidelines on the use of low FODMAP diets, but many clinical trials support the efficacy of low FODMAP diets in improving overall GI symptoms in IBS patients. There is some evidence that it can also be useful for people with Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis and other functional gastrointestinal disorders.

Some examples of low FODMAP foods are:

- All meats, fish and eggs, unless they are made with high-FODMAP ingredients such as wheat or high fructose corn syrup.
- All fats and oils.
- Most herbs and spices.
- Nuts and seeds: Almonds, cashews, peanuts, macadamia nuts, pine nuts, sesame seeds (not pistachios, which are high in FODMAPs).
- Fruits: Bananas, blueberries, cantaloupe, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, lemons, lime, mandarins, melons (except watermelon), oranges, passionfruit, raspberries, strawberries.
- Sweeteners: Maple syrup, molasses, stevia and most artificial sweeteners (Aspartame, saccharine, sucralose).
- Dairy products: Lactose-free dairy products and hard cheeses (including brie and camembert).
- Vegetables: Alfalfa, bell peppers, bok choy, carrots, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, ginger, green beans, kale, lettuce, chives, olives, pars-
nips, potatoes, radishes, spinach, spring onion (only green), squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, yams, water chestnuts, zucchini.

- Grains: Corn, oats, rice, quinoa, sorghum, tapioca.

Foods that are high in FODMAPs include:
- Fruits: Apples, applesauce, apricots, blackberries, boysenberries, cherries, canned fruit, dates, figs, pears, peaches, watermelon.
- Sweeteners: Fructose, honey, high fructose corn syrup, xylitol, mannitol, maltitol, sorbitol, sugar free sweets containing polyols – usually ending in -ol or isomalt.
- Dairy products: Milk (from cows, goats and sheep), ice cream, most yogurts, sour cream, soft and fresh cheeses (cottage, ricotta, etc.) and whey protein supplements.
- Vegetables: Artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic, fennel, leeks, mushrooms, okra, onions, peas, shallots.
- Legumes: Beans, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans, baked beans, soybeans.
- Wheat: Bread, pasta, most breakfast cereals, tortillas, waffles, pancakes, crackers, biscuits, and grains such as barley and rye.
- Beverages: Beer, fortified wines, soft drinks with high fructose corn syrup, milk, soy milk, fruit juices.

Eating the Low FODMAP Way

The low FODMAP diet is incorporated in two phases. It starts with an elimination from the diet of foods high in FODMAPs for a period of 6 – 8 weeks. This is then followed by a gradual reintroduction of certain FODMAP containing foods up to a level that an individual can comfortably tolerate before experiencing symptoms. During this reintroduction period, patients should keep track of signs and symptoms of gastrointestinal distress in order to help identify any food offenders. Over-restriction of FODMAPs can lead to increased risk of nutrient deficiencies, and is therefore not recommended. Patients on a low FODMAP diet should be monitored for nutritional adequacy by a dietitian.

FODMAP and Pregnancy

Most women experience some GI changes during pregnancy. Changes such as loss of appetite, heartburn, an aversion to certain foods and morning sickness can make it difficult to meet nutritional needs. The iron and calcium in prenatal vitamins can cause constipation. Pregnant women with pre-existing IBS symptoms are more likely to suffer more digestive troubles than the average mom-to-be. Pregnancy can definitely make symptoms worse.

When women are juggling both IBS and pregnancy, consulting with a dietitian is very important whether they are following a low FODMAP diet or not. Use of the low FODMAP diet as therapy in pregnancy is not recommended, but certain lifestyle changes can help improve the symptoms.

Recommendations for Pregnancy

Encourage pregnant women experiencing GI symptoms to:
- Drink plenty of fluids – Hydrating helps relieve constipation.
- Keep moving – Exercising regularly aids in digestion and helps the client feel physically and emotionally stronger.
- Get enough fiber – Foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can ease constipation. Fiber helps bring water into the intestines, softening the stool and allowing it to pass more easily.
- Track foods – Use a food log to keep track of which foods trigger symptoms and when the IBS flares.
- Stay relaxed – Since stress plays a big part in IBS, it’s important for clients to be aware of their emotions and practice self-care.
- Make over-the-counter adjustments – A stool softener can relieve constipation. (Check with your doctor.)

Following a low FODMAP diet can be challenging. Encourage clients who are interested in a FODMAP diet to seek the help of a FODMAP knowledgeable dietitian.

References
**Generation Z**

– Their Beliefs and Work Ethics

by David Raymond
Manager, Quality and Innovation

**The Study of Generations Is Fun**

Each generation has its own unique characteristics, which make it unique, and in turn, stand apart from the others. What makes the study of generations fun is that it’s so interesting to compare each of them to yourself. Understanding these distinguishing characteristics makes us wiser, as we relate to others in different generations. The place where generational convergence reaches its peak in terms of diversity is in the workplace.

**Making Room for the Next Generation**

You have likely read about generational diversity in recent years, especially research and commentary about Millennials. However, just like every generation before, Millennials need to make room for the up and coming generation — the one about to make their workplace debut, the young men and women of Generation Z. Let’s learn a little about how they think, what they believe, and how they are preparing themselves to enter the workplace.

But first, if you are relatively new to the generational conversation, let’s review a few basic tenets.

**Generations’ Defining Moments**

How do large groups of strangers, associated only by a

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Generally Born Between</th>
<th>Defining Moments</th>
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| Traditionalists | 1925 - 1945 | World War II, The Great Depression, Amelia Earhart crosses the Atlantic, American families gather around the radio together...
| Baby Boomers | 1946 - 1964 | Korean War, America moves to the suburbs, families gather around the television together, birth of the civil rights movement, John F. Kennedy’s assassination, the birth of Rock n’ Roll...
| Generation X | 1965 - 1979 | Vietnam War, man walks on the moon, hippies, Woodstock, make peace - not war protests, leisure suits, and bellbottoms...
| Generation Z | 1994 - 2010 | Afghanistan / Iraq, Harry Potter, hanging chads, the iPod, iPhone, and iPad, Steve Jobs, OJ Simpson, Princess Diana, Hip Hop and Rap become mainstream, social networking-media, election of the first African-American US President... |
range in birth years, collectively seem to share common beliefs and work ethics? Members of these groups we call "generations" tend to form naturally through shared experiences and exposure to the same social influences. These include major historical events, emerging innovations, or major shifts in social consciousness. These shared experiences are also known as their “defining moments.” These major historical events, socially impacting topics, and disruptive innovations have profoundly shaped the perspectives, lives, beliefs, and sociopolitical stances on the ethics of each generation.

**Why Does Generational Diversity Matter?**

Generational diversity matters as much as any other type of diversity when it comes to becoming a well-balanced and healthy society. Its value even extends into how effectively businesses operate. Respecting and understanding our generational distinctions allow us to be more successful:

- Expand our own knowledge and appreciation of different social and cultural beliefs associated with other generations.
- Plan for effective marketing campaigns to “connect” to specific customer types.
- Understand the impact of making sweeping changes in our workplace.

However, one of the most common reasons we should seek to understand generational diversity is to understand how, as employers, we can prepare for each new generation as they enter the workforce.

Generations most often differentiate by their core beliefs and behaviors around fundamental personal preferences and lifestyle choices. The most commonly considered preferences that impact the workplace have to do with:

- Communication preferences (styles and methods)
- Learning styles and methods
- Work ethic and workstyle preferences
- Use of technology

**Who Is Generation Z?**

Gen Z began entering the workforce as teens in 2010, and by 2025 will dominate the workforce in population. So, what do we need to understand about them so that their transition is smooth and results in a balanced and overall satisfied workforce? In an article published on the Wharton School’s website, authors David and Jonah Stillman share insights from their podcast about managing Generation Z.

1. **Generation Z Is Ambitious and Hardworking**

   Compared to Millennials, who currently dominate the workforce in population, Gen Z is more competitive and independent. Millennials were raised to believe in collaboration and inclusion, which is evident in their work ethic. However, Gen Z does not agree with the “everyone wins because everyone works together” concept. They believe in the distinction between winning and losing. If you don’t work harder than everyone else to achieve or even overachieve a goal, there are plenty of other Gen Z’ers that will work harder to take your job.

2. **Generation Z Babies Are “Phygital”**

   Gen Z has never known life without the internet or social media. In fact, a constant connection to the world at large, including an interactive digital lifestyle is almost as much of a physical requirement to sustain life as air and water are to the rest of us! However, their use of this technology is fully commoditized in their minds, so they are less likely to “worship” technology as much as many Millennials.

   Innovation is somewhat of a core trait of Gen Z. They are so comfortable with technology they can serve as authority figures in the modern workplace. They are quick to streamline processes, and they have less hesitation or fear to try something new.

3. **Generation Z Is Looking for Alternatives**

   Gen Z’s overall perspective in life is that all is flexible. In fact, they are more likely to seek solutions to life’s challenges by seeking alternative means than many of their Millennial contemporaries.

   Alternatives to education: Steadfast traditions such as, “you must go to college right after high school” and “the only way to get a real education is from a college or university,” are less likely to have sustainable value. “We know that 75 percent of Gen Z’ers believe that there are other ways of getting a good (Continued on page 18)
Generation Z

(Continued from page 17)

"education than by going to college," Jonah Stillman said.

Alternative paths for career growth: Gen Z also has no issue with “starting at the bottom,” and learning and earning their way to the top, through hard work and perseverance. Their desire to demonstrate earning their growth is important.

4. Generation Z prefers traditional methods of communication

Gen Z prefers to be live and in-person, over any virtual encounter. They have come to appreciate that there is value in live, one-to-one dialogues that allow for confidentiality, intimacy or a respect for privacy. In addition, body language is just as meaningful as the words they speak or write. This is especially true in communicating with their managers.

5. Preparing for Gen Z’s arrival in the workforce

A recent survey of U.S. and Canadian college students between the ages of 18 and 25 seeking to help employers prepare for the incoming deluge of young professionals demonstrated that:

• 77 percent of those surveyed said Gen Z’ers anticipate working harder than previous generations but expect to be rewarded for it.
• Careers are about stability and growth.
• They want a roadmap to success with actionable steps to improving their standing in the company.
• Despite growing up in and around the Great Recession, Generation Z’s work ethic remained strong, but their belief in fair compensation did not wane.

Generation Z’s beliefs and work ethic, like most generations before them, are a reflection of, and response to, their collective perspectives on both the positive and negative influencing experiences. However, they are also unique, in that their mix, frequency, and specifics have never happened before in history, in exactly the same way.

References


Additionally, if you choose to concern yourself with your coworker’s success, and your contributions result in improving their new job experiences, you will likely benefit as well. Who knows, you may be placed on a project together, and the investments you made early on may pay off within the project your performance will also be evaluated on!
Let's Talk
with Mrs. Always B Wright, MS, IBCLC

As y'all are well aware, my hubby is a big fan of steak knives. It's that time of year where Mr. Eaton Wright leaves me to tend to the little ones and flies away to the fascinating National Steak Knife Convention. Zwilling and Wusthof and Cutco—oh my! Trust me, I'm not missing out.

Instead of boring you with another list of impossible New Year's resolutions, let's talk about gettin' with the times. This year is all about new clients. Whether the goal is reaching new clients or, let's face it, being able to relate to the clients we already have—it's time to look around and make sure we are adaptable.

Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z... the list goes on and on and can be rather confusing. You probably learned a lot about Gen Z in David Raymond's article on page 16. Here's a fact of life—we believe our clients keep getting "younger" but really we are just getting older and they are staying the same age. Some people have the gift of relating with generations younger than their own—like my mom, for example. She is really good at acting like she is 25. But I'll go on. You do not need to dress like you are 18 (please don't) in order to relate to young moms. Here are three realistic ways to relate to WIC clients who may be a generation, or two, younger than you:

1. Don't lump "them" into one stereotype. Almost all of our WIC staff have been through the Power of Influence training and know how powerful labeling is. As soon as you assume you understand "them" you will lose an opportunity to really get to the heart of an issue.

2. When you have an opportunity to educate a client, if they ask the "why" of what you are recommending, don't provide an answer that is as simple as "that's just how things are." Let me provide an example...

Mom: "How long should someone breastfeed their baby?"
You: "Well the Academy of Pediatrics recommends at least one year and the CDC recommends at least two years!"

No one wants to do something simply because the powers above them say it's the right thing to do. Instead, provide real reasons as to why mom may want to breastfeed at least a year. It could be because breastmilk is free, that she won't have to deal with formula prep, or the immune protection she hopes to give her baby. But it has to be a reason she can relate to or that she is interested in, not just your laundry list of benefits. Tricky, right?

3. Listen. This step is the hardest, yet easiest way to relate. Figure out what you have in common. For example, she may love cat videos too. We are all here trying to survive this thing called life. Motherhood is hard whether you are 16, 19, or 35. If you take this step, you can avoid falling into the traps of assumption or judgement.

Pop Quiz
You are finishing up with a new client. You hand her the shopping list full of delicious WIC foods and she asks, “Can you email or text me an appointment reminder so I don't lose it?" You answer with:

a) Of course! We have a new system (*cough* TXIN) that will let me do that in a jiffy!
b) Are you nuts? Child, why would you want to strain your eyes on that tiny phone screen when you could have this beautiful piece of paper?
c) We can't do that today, but we will be able to when we get our new jazzy system on *insert TXIN rollout date here*!

Answer: A or C. Yes, the new system will allow for text or email appointment reminders.

About the author: Mrs. Always B is a lactation consultant, mother, chef, personal shopper, and wife to Eaton Wright, a certified NUT based in Austin, Texas.
Texas WIC News is also available on the Texas WIC website!
http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/gi/wicnews.shtm

next issue:
National Nutrition Month

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