

NEWS RELEASE
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WIC program moves to electronic food benefits system

(Lawrence, KS) – Kansas’ public health nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children, commonly called WIC, is offering families a new way to shop for food benefits using an electronic benefit transaction card. WIC families in Shawnee County began piloting the system last September. The pilot was a success and now WIC families in Douglas County will begin receiving cards Jan. 10. Statewide rollout of the new eWIC cards will be completed by June 1.

Currently, participants in the WIC program use paper checks to buy foods provided by the program. Now, with the new eWIC card, shopping will be easier and WIC families will be able to better track their monthly food balance. Participants also have access to a new WIC Shopper Smart Phone App allowing them to scan a food’s bar code to determine if it is a WIC allowed food.

Every month, WIC provides services at more than 100 clinic sites throughout Kansas, including at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, and serves approximately 53,000 women, infants and children under age 5. These WIC families shop at more than 300 Kansas grocery stores and spend \$49 million a year using their WIC food benefits. The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department’s site serves about 1,500 clients and issues about \$1 million in food benefits annually that can be used at 12 stores in Douglas County.

“The new eWIC cards will be great because it will make shopping for WIC food benefits more convenient and easier for WIC participants and it will help reduce the stigma that can be associated with using paper checks when checking out at grocery stores,” WIC Supervisor Rachel Levy, of the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, said. “It will also simplify participation in the WIC program.”

WIC, officially titled the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, offers participant-centered nutrition education, healthy food, breastfeeding support and has served as a gateway for preventative health for more than 40 years. It is considered one of the most successful, cost-effective and important nutrition intervention programs in the United States.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department’s WIC program has openings. For more information, visit ldchealth.org/WIC or call 785-843-0721.

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