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WIC works

Stanton- Two hundred thousand moms, babies and children less than 5 years of age currently receive nutritious foods from the Michigan Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program; that's one out of every two babies born in Michigan. Locally, that number equates to 1,148 Clinton County residents, 1,489 Gratiot County residents, and 2,090 Montcalm County residents receiving WIC benefits through the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD).

The Women, Infants & Children program is a federally funded supplemental nutrition program that has been serving low and moderate income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum (the period following childbirth) women, infants and children up to age 5 with nutritional related health problems since 1972. The program provides a combination of nutrition education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health care services. Pregnant and postpartum women and children (under age 5) receive food benefits for milk, cheese, eggs, cereals, peanut butter, dried beans or peas, fruit or vegetable juices, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and tortillas. If an infant isn't fully breastfed, iron-fortified infant formula is available for the first year of life as well. In addition, WIC also provides participants with coupons to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets through the Project Fresh program.

There is no doubt that WIC has a profound effect on families. "Being a single mother, I couldn't make it without WIC," said one client. "I work full time and still have a hard time making ends meet. WIC has been a lifesaver."

"WIC has been very beneficial," said another client. "My children and I would be in a very tough spot without it."

WIC has a proven track record of demonstrating a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development. Research shows that the earlier a pregnant woman receives nutritional benefits from WIC, the more likely she is to seek prenatal care and deliver a normal weight infant. For every dollar spent by this program, more than three dollars in subsequent health care costs are saved.

Benefits to children participating in WIC include:

- Higher rates of immunizations against childhood diseases.
- Better vocabularies and digit memory scores among four and five year olds in early childhood compared to children who did not participate in WIC.
- Lower rate of anemia among children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years.
- Significant improvement in children's dietary intake of vitamins and nutrients.

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Benefits to Women and Infants participating in WIC include:

- Significant increase in the number of women receiving adequate prenatal care.
- Dramatic decrease in the infant mortality among Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Improvement in weight gain and dietary intake in pregnant and postpartum women.
- Decrease in low birth weight and pre-term births.

A family of four may earn \$40,000 per year and qualify for WIC. If you think you may qualify or have questions about the WIC program, visit www.mmdhd.org for more information or call:

989-224-2195 in Clinton County

989-875-3681 in Gratiot County

989-831-5237 in Montcalm County

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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