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Media Contact: Mark O'Neill, ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration and Leaders from Across the Commonwealth Celebrate 50th Anniversary of WIC Program

PA WIC serves nearly 200,000 participants each month at more than 230 clinics and 1,235 retail stores throughout Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – This morning, **Acting Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen** joined national, state, and local leaders to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pennsylvania's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides nutrition and other vital supports to residents throughout Pennsylvania.

Earlier this month, Governor Josh Shapiro [issued a proclamation](#) declaring May 2024 as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Month.

"As a pediatrician, I have seen firsthand the benefits of the PA WIC program for women, children, and families across the Commonwealth. The program supports nutritional and age-appropriate education and diets, breastfeeding support and education, and referrals to services in their communities," said **Acting Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen**. "Evaluations of the WIC program across decades have consistently shown that participation results in better pregnancy and child health outcomes. Even after 50 years, the WIC program continues to evolve to meet the needs of Pennsylvania women, infants, and children."

Established in 1974, and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the [WIC program](#) administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Health provides vital nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and health and social services referrals to improve families' health outcomes.

The first WIC voucher in Pennsylvania was issued in Allegheny County on May 28, 1974.

The Department of Health provides technical support, fiscal oversight, and administrative guidance to 22 local agencies that administer the WIC program across 67 counties in the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvanians are eligible for WIC if they are:

- Women who are pregnant or had a baby in the past six months (or 12 months if breastfeeding);
- Infants and children under age five years; or
- Fathers, grandparents, and foster parents who are the legal guardian of a child under age five, may apply for WIC on their behalf.

The WIC program continues to grow in Pennsylvania, with the recent addition of five WIC mobile units currently in operation and up to five more units expected to be in operation by September 30, 2024. Each mobile unit is customized to operate as a fully functional WIC satellite clinic that reaches rural and urban areas.

“Mobile WIC units help meet the needs of people facing transportation barriers by meeting them where they are,” said **Pennsylvania WIC Director Sally Zubairu-Cofield**. “The fleet of ‘clinics on wheels’ will help increase participation in the WIC program, delivering greater access and equity throughout Pennsylvania.”

Other recent innovations include:

- Self-checkout options in some stores,
- The WIC Shopper Guide, and
- Moving from hand-written appointment cards to using modern technology for text messaging appointment reminders and messages.

Pennsylvania’s WIC program serves nearly 200,000 women, infants, and children under age five each month at [more than 230 clinics](#) and 1,235 retail stores currently providing WIC-approved nutritious foods throughout the Commonwealth.

Over the decades, studies conducted by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service as well as non-government entities indicated that [WIC provides many benefits](#) including:

- Fewer premature births and infant deaths,
- Savings in health care costs,
- Improved infant feeding practices, and
- Improved cognitive development.

Find [more information about WIC](#) on the Department of Health’s website. To determine eligibility for other state assistance programs, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.

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