



# Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together

## Coordinating with Health Care Providers

This section has been designed to enhance the WIC nutrition staff's ability to successfully work with health care providers to endorse and utilize consistent messages that promote healthy weights in young children. Our goal is to ensure that WIC families receive consistent, positive messages from both WIC and health care providers about eating patterns and achieving a healthy weight. To accomplish this, the Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program has developed:

- ***Steps to Healthy Weight in Children*** – guidance for providing standardized, age-appropriate nutrition messages
- **Six 'healthy weight' messages** developed as colorful posters
  - Wall posters for health care providers
  - Mini-posters for use in WIC nutrition counseling sessions
- ***Prescription for Your Healthy Child*** pads to 'prescribe' diet and physical activity behavior changes
- ***Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together*** Provider Toolkit for establishing successful partnerships between WIC nutrition staff and health care providers

Contents of this section include:

- ✓ Building a partnership with health care providers
- ✓ Meeting with health care providers
  - Making the First Contact - How to Get in the Door
  - Sharing the Toolkit - Dialogue for a Ten-Minute Meeting
  - PowerPoint Presentations for sharing the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* initiative with the medical community

**P**romoting healthy eating behaviors and healthy weights in children is a shared responsibility. In partnership with the medical community, WIC can make a difference in the nutritional status of our participants and help ensure that families receive coordinated, non-duplicative and supportive care.

Because parents turn first to their health care provider for an assessment of their child's weight status and to WIC for guidance on nutrition and feeding their children, **effective communication and coordination between the medical community and WIC nutrition staff is essential.** The materials developed through the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* project, for coordinating with health care providers, are to be presented by the Senior Nutritionist or a designated Program Nutritionist during a brief visit.

## Building a Partnership with Health Care Providers

It is important to establish a partnership with health care providers. This section of the manual and the tools included will support nutrition counselors in initiating and developing this partnership, essential to preventing childhood overweight. When communicating with health care providers, keep in mind these four steps - prepare, prioritize, personalize and provide follow-up.

### ✓ **Prepare**

- Decide what you are going to talk about
- Get materials in order
- Practice, practice, practice

### ✓ **Prioritize** – know your key messages

- Know what you want to communicate
- Choose 1-2 of the most important points you want to make, and deliver them in a clear and concise manner
- Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you have just told them

### ✓ **Personalize** – the conversation

- Know your audience
- Communicate your expertise
- Identify what you have to offer them
- Identify services your local WIC program can offer to their patients

### ✓ **Provide follow-up**

- Plan regular follow-up to reinforce the partnership; this is not a one-time activity
- Build a professional relationship – one built on trust and respect
- Don't get frustrated; successful initiatives and relationships take time to develop
- Reinforce positive outcomes of collaboration efforts
- Set a time to talk about progress and efforts; don't let too much time pass between communications





## Meeting with Health Care Providers

**T**o provide the best care to WIC families, it is essential for WIC nutrition staff to have a good relationship with local health care providers. A team effort will go a long way in preventing childhood overweight. Often, nutrition staff find building this relationship to be a difficult task. Providers are generally very busy and have limited time available for meetings. Nutrition staff who have limited experience working with the medical community may feel intimidated as they make their first contacts.

The sample dialogues, talking points and PowerPoint presentations that follow were designed to make it easier for you to make your first contact with a health care provider and to have a succinct yet effective, meeting to share the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* materials.

### Making the First Contact - How to Get in the Door!

**T**he following sample dialogue and talking points can be used when making an appointment to meet with a health care provider to discuss this project.

*“Hello...this is \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ WIC Program. We are launching a new initiative to prevent childhood overweight. I was hoping that Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ might be interested in joining the growing group of health care providers who are working with us on this project. I will only need about 15 minutes of his/her time. What is the best way to get in touch with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ to make an appointment?”*

### Talking Points:

- Childhood overweight has reached epidemic proportions. Overweight is easier to prevent than to treat. WIC is concerned about the future health of our children and has embarked on a new initiative to prevent childhood overweight.
- One goal of the initiative is to partner with health care providers to deliver consistent, age-appropriate, preventive messages that promote a healthy weight in families.
- WIC has developed new materials that are available to health care providers. The concepts in the materials have been developed with input from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Subcommittee on Obesity and the Massachusetts WIC Medical Advisory Board. Both groups have endorsed the initiative.

- The materials, available free of charge, utilize a new cutting-edge, emotion-based style of messaging. Wall-size posters, behavior change prescription pads and a CD with nutrition and physical activity educational materials are available to providers.
- The use of these messages and materials, in conjunction with referrals to WIC for counseling on feeding young children, will provide patients with consistent diet and weight messages and a sense of coordinated care. Partnering with WIC will enhance services for patients and save health care providers time.





## Sharing the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* Provider Toolkit

**A Provider Toolkit** has been developed to explain the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* initiative to health care providers and their staff and to provide them with tools to partner with WIC. The Toolkit and the PowerPoint presentations (included in this manual on CD) can be used by the WIC Senior Nutritionist or other designated Program Nutritionists for visiting and speaking with health care providers about collaborating to prevent childhood overweight. The Toolkit should be personalized with local program activities, as well as local program contact information. It is important to review the contents of the Toolkit with health care providers during visits – even brief visits – as they may not have the time to adequately examine the materials afterwards.

### Contents of the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* Provider Toolkit:

#### Right Side

- ✓ Letter of Support from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Subcommittee on Obesity
- ✓ *Prescription for Your Healthy Child* pad
- ✓ *Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* (Green header)
- ✓ Six new nutrition messages (English)
- ✓ *Targeted Messages for Hispanic Families* (Red header)
- ✓ *Project Overview* (Yellow header)

#### Left Side

- ✓ CD containing ready-to-print files for:
  - Six new nutrition messages targeting Hispanic families (English and Spanish)
  - Fit WIC materials (English and Spanish)
    - *Playing with Your Baby*
    - *Playing with Your Toddler*
    - *Playing with Your 3-5 Year Old*
- ✓ *What WIC Can Do for You* (Blue header)
- ✓ *WIC Fast Facts*
- ✓ *Selected References: Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* (Green header)
- ✓ *Selected References Regarding Childhood Overweight* (Green header)
- ✓ *WIC Position Paper: The Introduction of Solid Foods In Infancy*
- ✓ *WIC Position Paper: The Use of Fruit Juice with Infants and Preschoolers*

## Dialogue for Sharing the *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* Provider Toolkit:

The following is a sample dialogue with talking points, to use to introduce the Toolkit to health care providers during a meeting:

*“As you are aware, childhood obesity is an increasing threat to our children. It’s easy to recognize childhood obesity as a growing problem but difficult to know exactly what to do about it. No one has all the answers.*

*The Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program was awarded a USDA Special Projects Grant to develop messages and materials that target the prevention of overweight in children, with a special focus on our Hispanic children. These materials were created after extensive research with WIC mothers and have been endorsed by the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Subcommittee on Obesity and the Massachusetts WIC Medical Advisory Board.*

*I want to share these materials with you to better coordinate with you and to provide the best possible care to the families we serve.*

*We know you have tremendous influence with your patients. If you recommend a change in behavior, it’s likely that the parent will take your recommendation very seriously.*

*We invite you to join forces with WIC and other health care providers to change the lives of children and families in Massachusetts. WIC needs you and you need WIC to make a difference and prevent childhood overweight.”*

**S**hare contents of the Toolkit with health care providers by showing:

- ✓ *Letter of Support* from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Subcommittee on Obesity.
- ✓ *Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* (Green header) – The steps were reviewed and endorsed to promote consistent messages between WIC and health care providers. These are the topics that WIC nutrition counselors are committed to discussing with families. WIC is encouraging health care providers to relate the same messages to their patients. When families hear the same information from multiple sources, they are more likely to believe the messages and act on them.
- ✓ *Mini-posters* - As part of this special project, messages were developed that target unique beliefs and behaviors of Hispanic families. WIC will be using





these as educational materials in counseling and parenting groups. Available in English and Spanish.

- ✓ Wall-size posters for hanging in health care providers' clinic. Available in English and Spanish. (Recommendation: provide 1-2 posters at initial visit; return at a future date to provide an additional 1-2 posters to refresh the office)
- ✓ *Targeted Messages for Hispanic Families* (Red header) – This describes the background of each poster.
- ✓ *Project Overview* (Yellow header) – This describes the goals of this project, project tasks, focus group findings and anthropometric assessment results.
- ✓ *Prescription for Your Healthy Child* pad – This prescription pad will be available free of charge to health care providers. Explain how the pad is a simple, quick way health care providers can influence parents to take action. Encourage health care providers to use this pad by selecting a behavior change and checking off 'talk with your WIC counselor for personalized help on feeding your child.' WIC will follow-up on the prescription for the child by working with the family on targeted behavior change and ways to integrate behaviors into their daily life.
- ✓ *What WIC Can Do For You!* (Blue header) – This is extremely important to review with health care providers. Providers have expressed their concern that there is not enough time to discuss childhood overweight with parents. WIC has the time AND the expertise to talk with parents about this sensitive topic. This fact sheet will inform health care providers what WIC can do to enhance their medical services and save them time.
- ✓ *WIC Fast Facts* – This describes basic WIC benefits and eligibility for the WIC Nutrition Program.
- ✓ *Selected References: Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* and *Selected References: Preventing Childhood Overweight* (Green header) – These flyers list published articles related to *The Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* and references pertaining to childhood overweight.
- ✓ WIC position papers - *The Use of Fruit Juice with Infants and Preschoolers* and *The Introduction of Solid Foods in Infancy* – These important position papers are included to inform health care providers of WIC's position on the use of fruit juice with infants and preschoolers and the introduction of solid foods in infancy.

The following is a sample dialogue to conclude your meeting with providers and set the stage for future collaboration:

*“The staff at the \_\_\_\_\_ WIC office would like to be your partner in making a difference in the lives of the children we serve and curbing the epidemic of childhood overweight.*

*Are there any questions you have about WIC or about what else WIC can do for you?*

*With your permission, I’d like to schedule a time in about a month to touch base and provide additional posters or pads and answer any questions. Would that work for you? It may be best to secure the time and date now; I know how busy you are.*

*Thank you for taking time from your busy day to talk with me. We are very excited to be working with you on this critical issue. We welcome your comments and questions any time. Here’s my card – please feel free to call me.”*

## **PowerPoint Presentations**

PowerPoint presentations can be an effective way to communicate with health care providers during staff meetings and grand rounds. Two PowerPoint presentations – slides and speaker notes - have been developed and are included on the CD in this manual. There is a 10-minute presentation and a 15-minute presentation. Included on the CD are 4 files: each presentation is available as a .PDF file, which cannot be edited, and as a Microsoft PowerPoint file that can be individualized to meet the timeframe and interest of your audience.

If time becomes limited while presenting the PowerPoint presentations, quickly show the visuals of the 6 messages - referring to the Toolkit for samples of the messages, and *Background of Messages* (red header). Conclude with *What WIC Can Do for You!* to highlight how WIC can enhance their services to patients and save them time.

The following pages are a copy of the 15-minute PowerPoint presentation, including speaker notes.

