



July 1, 2018

Dear Fellow Physicians:

It is widely understood by health care providers that a well-balanced and nutrient-rich diet is critical to a child's health and development. However, many Maine families do not have reliable access to essential nutrients, often resulting in malnutrition and obesity.


Food insecurity in children and families is not always easy to identify, often going unnoticed in schools and communities. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services has been diligently working to reduce the number of food insecure families and provide nutritional support to those in need. We are reaching out to health care providers to help in identifying such families and connecting them with the proper resources for support.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federally funded program that provides nutritious foods for families who are found to be at risk of, or are currently facing, food insecurity. Pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as infants and children who meet the program's income guidelines receive nutrition education, breastfeeding support, health screenings and referrals, and benefits to purchase healthy foods at WIC authorized food stores.

Partnering with WIC can help you provide follow-up and care continuity for patients as WIC helps your patients get prenatal care earlier, deliver healthier babies, receive support for breastfeeding, transform lifetime eating habits and implement healthy lifestyles.

ACOG and the National WIC Association recently created an innovative partnership which includes helpful documents to assist you in the referral of women to the WIC program that you have identified as potentially food insecure. Please note that you may refer pregnant women early in pregnancy.

It is important that we work together to safeguard the health of low-income families by making quality nutrition more accessible, ensuring that all women in Maine can be healthy and well-nourished.

Sincerely,


Bruce Bates, DO
Director, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention