

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PA WIC ADVISORY BOARD

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WIC PROGRAM HEARING TRANSCRIPT

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BEFORE: DR. DEBRA BOGEN, Chair
Lisa Sanchez, Member
Miriam Seidel, Member
Britney Zwergel, Vice Chair, Member
Gerria Coffee, Member
Essence Cohen-Fields, Member
Sally Zubairu-Cofield, Member
Raeni Yock, Member
Cathy Moffitt, Member
Theodore Deitman, Member
Alex Baloga, Member

HEARING: Tuesday, July 22, 2025
1:02 p.m.

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams

Reporter: Alexia Smith

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OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicholas Kiger, Board Counsel, Joseph McLaughlin,
Jessica Smith, Jay Mast, Jessica Garvick

I N D E X

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NONE OFFERED

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our call today. I'm officially calling this meeting to order. This is the Women, Infants, and Children State Advisory Board meeting being held at one o'clock on July 22nd. As you I hope all know, I'm Dr. Debra Bogen. I'm your Secretary of Health for the Department - for Pennsylvania Department of Health. And I also have the honor of serving as a chair of this Board.

So, a couple of preliminary matters. One, this meeting is being recorded. By staying on, you are consenting to being recorded. And two, this meeting is being transcribed by a stenographer. There are a few procedural matters we need to go through as usual. First is the attendance via roll call. After I read your name and role, please acknowledge that you are present. Lisa Sanchez, medical professional.

MS. SANCHEZ: Present.

CHAIR: Thank you, Lisa. Miriam Seidel, food and security advocate.

MS. SEIDEL: Present.

CHAIR: Thank you. Britney Zwergel,

1 food and security advocate.

2 MS. ZWERGEL: Present.

3 CHAIR: Thank you, Britney. Katja -
4 I never get your last name spelled - pronounced
5 properly. Remind me one more time how to say it
6 properly. Is Katja on? Nope. Okay. So Katja's
7 not on. Gerria Coffee?

8 MS. COFFEE: Good afternoon.

9 CHAIR: Good afternoon, Gerria.
10 Thank you. Essence Cohen-Fields, current or former
11 WIC participant.

12 MS. COHEN-FIELDS: Present.

13 CHAIR: Thank you, Essence. Raeni
14 Yock, current or former WIC participant.

15 MS. YOCK: Present.

16 CHAIR: Thank you, Raeni. Bobbie
17 Johnson, current or former WIC participant. Okay.
18 Cathy Moffitt, WIC local agency rep.

19 MS. MOFFITT: Present.

20 CHAIR: Thank you, Cathy. Theodore
21 Deitman, WIC local agency rep.

22 MR. DEITMAN: Present.

23 CHAIR: Thank you. Michael Howells,
24 WIC agents - authorized vendor or food merchant. I
25 don't think we have Michael online. Alex Baloga,

1 WIC authorized vendor or food merchant. Don't think
2 he's present. And Amaka Nnamani. Amaka on?

3 All right.

4 Mr. Kiger, can you confirm that we
5 have a quorum for today's meeting?

6 ATTORNEY KIGER: Secretary, I have
7 eight by my count. So we are okay to proceed, but
8 we'll hold off on voting to approve the meeting
9 minutes. We'll see if maybe we can come back to it
10 if more folks join the meeting as we move on.

11 CHAIR: Okay.

12 Thank you. And just as you all know,
13 a quorum for this Board is 10 of 15 voting members.
14 So everyone's presence, whether virtual or in person
15 at each meeting is very important. There must be a
16 quorum for the Board to conduct any official
17 business like voting. A couple of quick reminders.

18 Board members should make every
19 effort to let us know ahead of time if they are
20 unable to attend a specific meeting. And also to
21 remind Board members they're expected to remain on
22 camera during meetings to the extent you are able to
23 do so. Our second order of business is to approve
24 the meeting minutes from April Board meeting. You
25 were all sent the meeting minutes for this meeting

1 held on April 22nd, but this was the delayed
2 meeting. Right. That was held in June. Am I
3 remembering this correctly? On June 4th.

4 I hope you had a chance to review
5 these minutes. There were no requested edits. So
6 at this time may I get a motion to approve the
7 meeting minutes for the -?

8 ATTORNEY KIGER: Sorry, Secretary,
9 we're just - this is Board Counsel. This is Nick
10 Kiger. I'm just - we're just going to hold off on
11 this until we get a quorum of 10.

12 CHAIR: Yep. Okay.

13 We can't vote on the - thank you so
14 much. Totally forgot about that. We're going to
15 skip ahead. I do want to let you know that the
16 Board received a letter a few weeks ago from three
17 state representatives, Rep. Wentling, Bonner and
18 Brown and they made suggestions related to
19 increasing accessibility to the WIC program.

20 They appreciate the importance of the
21 program. They wanted us to make sure it's as
22 accessible as possible. I worked with our WIC
23 program leadership on a written response to their
24 suggestions. The good news is that of their
25 suggestions were the team has already been working

1 on them. So that's great.

2 For example, they suggested a number
3 of regulatory changes and our team began a complete
4 review of the WIC regulations in March of this year.
5 Two of their suggested changes were to remove the
6 requirements for grocery stores to serve at least 25
7 participants per month.

8 That regulation is not currently
9 being enforced and we will propose that officially
10 changes in any updated regulations. The regulations
11 also call for participating stores to be full
12 grocery stores. And again, in current practice
13 that's not really being enforced and will be changed
14 in our proposed regulations.

15 I do want to be clear that the
16 regulatory process of the state is a long road. It
17 takes years. So we started in March. We plan to
18 continue that, but it will take a couple of years to
19 see those come fully into practice. We will be
20 sharing the full response that I sent as the Board
21 Chair to those representatives after the meeting.
22 You'll get it in your email so it's already been
23 sent. It's really just for your information if you
24 want to see the response we sent.

25 So thank you for your participation

1 and dedication and commitment to this Board and I'm
2 going to turn things over to Sally and if and when
3 we get a full quorum, we will vote on the minutes.
4 Okay. Sally it's all yours.

5 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you, Dr.
6 Bogen. All right. I'm going to just move to our
7 third order of business. Making the Board aware of
8 our Pennsylvania WIC statewide participation. I
9 just want to take this time to send a special thanks
10 to Thriving PA for all of their support and
11 assistance. They regularly update the PA WIC fact
12 sheet and they are the creators of the PA WIC fact
13 sheet.

14 So I will turn it over to Mr. Joseph
15 McLaughlin, who is our Director of Finance and
16 Technology here at the Bureau of WIC to give a quick
17 update on our statewide participation rates. Joe?

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Sally. I
19 have the June numbers in for participation and
20 enrollment and our June participation came in at
21 185,499 participants. And our enrollment came in at
22 197,901 enrollees. Thank you again to Thriving PA
23 for providing the June fact sheet. They are
24 reporting that from July 2024 to June 2025, our
25 participation has increased by 658 participants,

1 which is 0.36 percent.

2 And our enrollment has decreased by
3 904, which translates to 0.45 percent. Also on
4 their fact sheet we have our breastfeeding women for
5 June. Total women reported was 42,128.
6 Breastfeeding was 12,724. The percent on that is
7 coming out at 30.20 percent. So from July 2024 to
8 June 2025, the women's breastfeeding for PA WIC has
9 increased by 241. That represents 1.93 percent.
10 I'm now going to turn things over to Sally to go
11 over our next order of business. Sally?

12 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you.
13 Thank you. So now for our fourth order of business,
14 we're going to go ahead and share some important
15 announcements and updates pertaining to the
16 Pennsylvania WIC Advisory Board and the Pennsylvania
17 WIC program. So Dr. Kelly Kane has resigned from
18 her position on the Board effective July 2nd.

19 Today, July 22nd will be Ms. Seidel's
20 last day with us on this Board as well. We want to
21 take this opportunity to thank both of them for
22 their contributions to the Board, all the work that
23 they've done. Ms. Seidel has been here from the
24 very beginning, put in a lot, lot, lot of work and
25 effort and has been very passionate about the

1 importance of the WIC Advisory Board. So we want to
2 take this opportunity to thank you both. So with
3 that being said, we now have three vacant WIC
4 Advisory Board positions.

5 So in addition to the local WIC
6 agency representative position, which is Miriam's
7 appointment, the Board is now going to have the
8 following two vacancies. So a medical professional
9 and a food and security advocate. I have sent along
10 few emails to all of you here as well as the local
11 agency directors and some advocacy groups, making
12 everyone aware that we are seeking candidates for
13 these positions.

14 So the medical professional and food
15 and security advocate. All right. Just a reminder
16 in case anyone is interested or wants to share the
17 information. The Board does meet quarterly. It's
18 very important that as members you are joining these
19 meetings. As you see, we do need at least 10 of the
20 15 to make a quorum so that we're able to vote on
21 important matters.

22 So the members of the Board do
23 provide a variety of WIC related topics -
24 information on topics including outreach, technology
25 enhancements, breastfeeding support, nutrition

1 education and vendor access. So it's a great
2 opportunity for different voices to join and help
3 shape Pennsylvania WIC policy and help strategize at
4 the state level.

5 So if you or someone else from your
6 agency is interested in applying, please submit a
7 resume and an application. Also to that note, we do
8 keep on file resumes and applications, so maybe not
9 for this term, but if you just want to be considered
10 for a future appointment of that matter, please
11 shoot me an email with your resume and application
12 and if you need one, let me know. I will share that
13 again. So I will now turn things over with a few
14 updates from our state agency team.

15 I have on the call Jessica Smith who
16 is our Interim Outreach Coordinator for Pennsylvania
17 Bureau of WIC. She's going to share some feedback
18 from this year's public comment period. So if you
19 are not aware, each May, National WIC Month is also
20 Public Comment Month here. And that's where
21 different people get opportunities, participants,
22 stakeholders.

23 The public gets an opportunity to
24 share any comments or any feedback on the WIC
25 program. We use this information to add into our

1 state plan that we submit to United States
2 Department of Agriculture. So Jessica Smith, can
3 you please share some updates on public comment?

4 MS. SMITH: Thanks, Sally. As you
5 mentioned, May wrapped up our public comment
6 sessions for this year. And just to give you a
7 quick rundown for anybody that's not aware, the four
8 sites that we held the-in person, which are also
9 held virtually to allow people some flexibility and
10 attendance.

11 But the four host sites this year
12 were CAP Lancaster, FHCCP North and the Allegheny
13 County Health Department. Within those sites,
14 people were offered the opportunity to log in
15 virtually and attend the meeting. They could show
16 up on site or they could send in different comments
17 throughout the year. Also, local agencies have the
18 opportunity to hand out paper sheets. So run
19 through that one more time. They get the
20 opportunity to submit comments through paper
21 comments, in-person, virtually.

22 And then something new that we did
23 this year was an online submission so they could
24 scan a QR code, type out their comment and submit it
25 to us that way. That form of submission also

1 allowed for 11 different languages, so I was
2 interested to see how that would go and how utilized
3 it would be. And then something else that we
4 offered a little different than the past was a
5 dedicated phone line to collect voice messaging.
6 It's always interesting to see what methods people
7 will utilize.

8 And this year, by far the most common
9 was that virtual form. We only had one come in from
10 another language and it was actually a test that I
11 threw out to see how it would come through in
12 Spanish. So unfortunately, the languages weren't
13 utilized how we had expected. But we did receive 61
14 different comments via those online forms.

15 We received 67 through the mail. And
16 what those mail comments to clear are those paper
17 comments that are filled out within the WIC offices
18 and then participants can either mail themselves or
19 they can hand them over to staff within their local
20 agencies to mail all together. So we received a
21 total of 61 through the mail.

22 16 of those came from CAP Lancaster,
23 three came from UNFHCC and 48 came from Fayette.
24 I'm going to say all of this, but also mention that
25 we do have an admin staff that was on an emergency

1 leave and there is a chance that she may have some
2 comments that haven't gotten to me yet. But as far
3 as I'm aware, those are the three local agencies
4 that we've received the comments from.

5 If anything would change on that in
6 the future, I can certainly get that information out
7 to the group. We received six verbal comments and
8 then two that were written and handed in during
9 those public comment sessions at the sites that I
10 previously noted. So that came up with a total of
11 136 comments. Scanning with what we've seen in the
12 past, a lot of these comments were just positive
13 feedback explaining their experiences at the WIC
14 agency.

15 A few were concerns that they had
16 with contacting their local agency or they couldn't
17 make appointments, things of that nature. All of
18 those comments have been followed up on and
19 addressed at the local agency level. So we're
20 really thankful for our local agencies for taking
21 the initiative to really reach out one-on-one to
22 those participants.

23 There were a lot of food package
24 feedback. As we've seen again in the past, a lot of
25 people were requesting those online methods of

1 utilizing food dollars. So at this point, what I've
2 done is all of the comments that we've received are
3 typed up and into one single spreadsheet. And then
4 they are all noted with what section of the WIC
5 program through the state agency. We'll be
6 reviewing them next.

7 So the next piece of the puzzle is
8 for each section to review them and then the
9 inclusion in the state plan. And if there's no
10 questions, I'll take turn things over to Jay, Jay
11 Mast, Public Health Program Manager and Compliance
12 Manager for the State WIC Agency to provide an
13 update on WIC federal regulations.

14 MR. MAST: Great, Jessica. Thank
15 you. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Jay. I
16 just wanted to take a couple minutes to explain what
17 a regulation is. Also provide an explanation as to
18 why WIC is updating regulations as well as provide a
19 very high level timeline moving forward as well.

20 So a regulation is any rule or
21 regulation or order in the nature of a rule or
22 regulation promulgated by an agency under statutory
23 authority in the administration of any statute
24 administered by or relating to the agency or
25 amending, revising or otherwise altering the terms

1 and provisions of an existing regulation or
2 prescribing the practices or procedure before such
3 agency. So there are a few reasons why we're
4 updating that I'd like to share with you. WIC is
5 wanting to better align with current practices and
6 procedures.

7 Also, WIC wanted to maintain
8 consistency with federal regulations, also wanting
9 to update terminology and also wanting to enhance
10 modernization efforts. The Pennsylvania WIC
11 regulations primarily relate to WIC vendors. If
12 anyone working on the vendor side would like to
13 discuss further, they may reach out directly to
14 Sally, our Bureau Director.

15 The process from proposal to final
16 form takes approximately two years to complete and
17 here are some of the stages that I wanted to
18 highlight. We have a pre-drafting and research
19 phase, there's a stakeholder engagement and outreach
20 phase, internal reviews and approvals. There's a
21 public comment period and then publication by the
22 Legislative Reference Bureau. So very high level
23 timeline moving forward. WIC will complete drafting
24 for the entire proposed package by late October.
25 We'll then move on to internal reviews.

1 The proposed regulations will be
2 delivered to the Office of General Counsel,
3 Governor's Policy Office and the Governor's Budget
4 Office for review in early December, followed by the
5 Office of Attorney General Review.

6 Then it will be delivered to the
7 Independent Regulatory Review Commission in spring
8 of 2026, public comment period and Independent
9 Regulatory Review Commission comment and begin the
10 drafting of the final form in summer of 2026 and
11 publish as final form in September of 2027. Thank
12 you and I'll hand it back over to Sally. Thank you.

13 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you, Jay.
14 Any questions on that? All right. Appreciate it.
15 So as you many of you may have already heard,
16 federal legislators are advancing on a budget
17 package proposing that the complete elimination of
18 SNAP-Ed funding, along with lots of other
19 significant cuts to SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition
20 Assistance Programs and Essential Safety Net
21 Program, especially for food and nutrition.

22 SNAP-Ed is a crucial partner in
23 promoting health and food security in Pennsylvania,
24 particularly for the WIC families and the families
25 that we serve here. We chair - there's about over

1 600,000 participants for Pennsylvania that benefit
2 from SNAP-Ed. So elimination of these funds is
3 going to result in a huge loss, approximately over
4 \$30 million annually to the Commonwealth. This has
5 been a concern not only for the WIC program, but for
6 programs all over the Commonwealth that partner with
7 SNAP-Ed as well.

8 I'm going to hand things over to one
9 of our partners here in Jessica Garvick and she's
10 with the Department of Human Services Office of
11 Income Maintenance and she's going to walk us
12 through our fifth order of business and she'll be
13 discussing some of the federal threats to nutrition
14 programs, specifically in SNAP-Ed and advocacy. So
15 Jessica?

16 MS. GARVICK: Good afternoon. Thank
17 you, Sally. My name is Jessica and we maintain the
18 SNAP-Ed grant that we have with Food and Nutrition
19 Services and our partner that manages that for us is
20 Penn State. As you know, the one big beautiful bill
21 or HR1 was signed by President Trump on July 4th.
22 And within that has a lot of changes, not only to
23 SNAP but definitely to SNAP-Ed.

24 So the - I'll start with some of the
25 others and we'll finish up with SNAP-Ed. So some of

1 the big impacts to SNAP, basically they want to
2 reevaluate how the benefit amounts are issued, the
3 amount - like the amount that household would
4 receive. And they want to adjust that, make sure
5 it's cost neutral. And we're going to start
6 adjusting that come October 1st, 2027.

7 Additionally, they're adding modifications to our
8 SNAP work requirements for adults.

9 They have changed the age requirement
10 from 18 to 54. It is now 18 to 64. And we used to
11 have an exemption if that household had a child
12 under four - had a child under 18. But now that has
13 been modified to having a child under 14. So if
14 they have a kid that's 14 and they're not working,
15 they'll be required to start working in order to
16 receive SNAP.

17 Additionally, there's some exemptions
18 that they removed. People that were homeless, under
19 24 that aged out of the foster care, and those that
20 are veterans. So all of those that were previously
21 exempted from the work requirement will now be
22 required to have the work requirement.

23 Additionally, we used to be able to waive the entire
24 state of the work requirements depending on the
25 unemployment rate and/or specifically to counties.

1 Now it's going to be very hard for us
2 as a state to waive any work requirements based on
3 how it is written into the new law. Basically
4 anybody, if the state has an unemployment rate above
5 10 percent, then there will be no waivers allowed to
6 waive that work requirement.

7 Additionally, we have what is called
8 heat and eat benefit, which is to our LIHEAP
9 individuals, those that receive energy assistance.
10 And by getting this heat and eat benefit, it helped
11 raise their SNAP benefit allotment level. But now
12 that has changed with this law as well.

13 This heat and eat benefit is no
14 longer available to households, only those
15 households that have an elderly or disabled member.
16 So a lot of households, their SNAP benefits are
17 going to go down. Let's see what else.
18 Additionally, we have some matching fund
19 requirements at the state level. If our error rate
20 is a certain percentage, there will be a requirement
21 that the state has to match the SNAP dollars that
22 are going into the program.

23 This will change in October of 2027
24 and if our error rate is above six percent to eight
25 percent, we will have to - the state will have to

1 pay five percent of those SNAP dollars. And then
2 for the percentage if it goes up, it's a higher
3 state dollar amount. So hopefully we can get our -
4 our error rate right now is less than the national
5 average, which is at 11 percent, but we are at 10.5
6 percent which would require the state to put 15
7 percent state dollars into that.

8 So we're trying to lower that before
9 this is enacted that we have to start paying state
10 dollars into it. Additionally, there are some
11 changes to non-citizens and who's eligible for SNAP.
12 There are some non-citizens that will be removed
13 that are no longer going to be eligible for SNAP.

14 So anybody that is here as a refugee
15 or those that have been granted asylum, they will no
16 longer be eligible for SNAP starting October -
17 November 1st, 2025. So this year. And then finally
18 the biggest one that was in this bill was the sunset
19 funding of the SNAP-Ed program at the end of this
20 year. So September 30th, 2025.

21 We do have some outstanding questions
22 with Food and Nutrition Services. No guidance has
23 been issued on any of these new proposals within the
24 law itself. But our biggest hope is that funding
25 for SNAP-Ed is usually available over a two year

1 period. So we're hoping that since the funding from
2 federal fiscal year 2025 we could hopefully still
3 have a SNAP, some sort of SNAP-Ed program in 2026.

4 Like I said, we're still working with
5 Food and Nutrition Services to get that answer, but
6 hopefully that funding will still be available and
7 we'll be able to have some SNAP-Ed in 2026. But
8 that's the biggest - that was the big cut,
9 obviously, which impacts WIC and then a lot of
10 people within Pennsylvania and all our partners that
11 do the nutrition education within the state of PA.
12 I don't know if anyone has any specific questions.

13 Unfortunately, we don't have a lot
14 answers yet. We do know some timeframes of when we
15 have to implement some of these changes, and some
16 are not immediate and some aren't. But as far as
17 the SNAP-Ed funding goes, we're still hoping to get
18 some answers very soon because our annual plan is
19 due to Food and Nutrition by August 15th of this
20 year. So we're working with Penn State right now,
21 but they're kind of stuck on how to draft that plan
22 for 2026.

23 MR. DEITMAN: Hello, this is Theodore
24 Deitman. I actually do have a question about the
25 error rate. I was curious when you mentioned that.

1 Can you explain exactly what that is and what is
2 considered an error rate? I'm just curious for my
3 own personal knowledge.

4 MS. GARVICK: Sure. The error rate,
5 they look at a bunch of different things. They do a
6 sampling of cases each month and it's based off the
7 SNAP benefit amounts. If they were paid correctly,
8 if it was either a positive error or a negative
9 error. So they either got too much in SNAP benefits
10 or they didn't get enough. And then there is a
11 special calculation. I'm not as familiar with that
12 because we have a whole separate branch that does
13 the quality control payment error rates. I just
14 know what we're at this moment.

15 MR. DEITMAN: Gotcha. Thank you for
16 that answer.

17 MS. GARVICK: Sure.

18 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you.
19 Thank you so much, Jessica. I don't see any more
20 hands raised. All right, thank you so much,
21 Jessica, for that update. Now that, you know, that
22 bill has passed, I just want to take my time to take
23 up moment to express just our deep appreciation for
24 DHS and the advocacy around SNAP-Ed.

25 Just the passion, the unwavering

1 support and commitment to protect these vital
2 nutrition programs that support the families that
3 rely on them. WIC and SNAP-Ed serve a lot of the
4 same households. And we know the power when these
5 two programs come together and the work that they do
6 in providing positive health outcomes and improving
7 health outcomes, reducing food insecurity, providing
8 education and support to these families. So
9 although the proposed cuts have sparked valid
10 concern and unfortunately we don't have too many
11 answers, we don't have much answers.

12 We are trying to keep people informed
13 as we hear things, making sure that we are
14 confirming what we hear and it is coming from the
15 source. All of your collective voices play key
16 roles in ensuring that the persons are at risk and
17 that are most harmed by these outcomes are not
18 forgotten.

19 So while this does bring some relief,
20 it also brings a new purpose and just a new meaning
21 of how important it is that we need to stand
22 together and continue to serve and work for the
23 benefit of our participants and our programs. SNAP-
24 Ed is a huge, huge supporter of WIC and we partner
25 on so many things just to strengthen the safety net

1 for food insecurity.

2 So we at Pennsylvania WIC are
3 committed to continue collaborating with SNAP-Ed and
4 try to build a more equitable and food secure future
5 for the families that we serve across the
6 Commonwealth. So just want to take this time to
7 just encourage all of you to just keep the momentum.
8 The work isn't done, but we know that there's so
9 much more that we can do when we work together and
10 stay together.

11 So thank you so much, Jessica. I'm
12 now going to turn things over to Britney Zwergel,
13 and she's going to walk us through the sixth order
14 of business. And that's just a follow up with SNAP-
15 Ed cuts. But we want to specifically talk about
16 implications now to Pennsylvania WIC, some
17 initiatives that we've been doing with SNAP-Ed and
18 why this is important to WIC. So Britney?

19 MS. ZWERGEL: Thanks, Sally. Thanks,
20 Jessica, for that background information. I just
21 wanted to reiterate that really WIC and SNAP-Ed,
22 they work together in tandem, aim to educate the
23 same population, to just create a more comprehensive
24 support system. I just want to talk about one of
25 the programs that SNAP-Ed has been supporting more

1 and more over the last couple years and that is the
2 Farmers Market Nutrition Program which impacts WIC
3 and also seniors across the state.

4 This year alone, Adagio Health SNAP-
5 Ed team is supporting 15 counties in Western
6 Pennsylvania with their work to help connect local
7 farmers bringing their produce to a WIC or senior
8 center, eliminating barriers such as transportation,
9 time and access for 15 counties over here.

10 And I see, you know, Cathy Moffitt on
11 our team from Westmoreland County has been a partner
12 of ours in that for many years and other WIC
13 agencies as well, according to seniors as well.
14 Last year, we were able to bring in over \$20,000
15 through those pop up markets. That is \$20,000 extra
16 revenue, additional revenue for our farmers.

17 That's also \$20,000 worth of fresh
18 fruits and vegetables that our WIC families and our
19 seniors got to enjoy as a result of that program.
20 So we were really grateful for the WIC agencies that
21 helped to support that, including Westmoreland. I
22 see Lisa on here from Meadville Medical Center, a
23 couple others that aren't on the call. I don't
24 believe Fayette, Blueprint is a couple others as
25 well. But without SNAP-Ed serving as that kind of

1 intermediary, that support won't necessarily be
2 there anymore.

3 The SNAP-Ed folks, if you didn't
4 know, they reached out to the farmers, they
5 connected all the dots. They picked up the produce,
6 brought it to the WIC Office and helped run the
7 market. Without SNAP-Ed there, we know that WIC
8 does not have the time, the capacity, the staffing,
9 the manpower to keep that program going long term.

10 So we are dedicated to finding out
11 ways to continue to support that even in the face of
12 SNAP-Ed's potential elimination here by supporting
13 with some more interns and figuring out a way to
14 help connect our with agencies across the state with
15 interns that can really help continue doing this
16 farmers market work years after this SNAP-Ed program
17 is gone. I can't talk about it too much. It's
18 still too fresh for me as a WIC agency and as a
19 SNAP-Ed provider.

20 It's a tough situation for me. But
21 thanks for the support that WIC has given us and
22 we're still here for the moment. We have high hopes
23 that we will be back in maybe a different version in
24 the not too distant future. So with that I'm going
25 to turn it back over to Sally.

1 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you,
2 Britney, and I do appreciate you acknowledging that
3 this is a lot to swallow, very tough. It's a very
4 sensitive subject and we're going to keep doing this
5 great work as long as we can. So just following
6 what you all have just heard on those federal cuts
7 to SNAP-Ed.

8 I really want us to take a moment to
9 focus on these implications and the types of threats
10 that they pose to WIC services. Why it's important
11 and vital for the Advisory Board to stay actively
12 engaged and making sure that we try to do what we
13 can to protect these partnerships. Many of you all
14 already know that SNAP and WIC work in tandem, just
15 like Britney said, to support the nutrition and
16 wellbeing of low income families. SNAP works a lot
17 and very hard to provide essential nutrition
18 education to these communities.

19 SNAP-Ed offered cooking classes,
20 grocery store tours, hands-on learning that really
21 help foster WIC specifically and educate our
22 participants. They work with a number of agencies,
23 not only WIC. So it's very important for us to stay
24 engaged just to keep these and support these changes
25 so that they're lasting. Eliminating these funds we

1 know is going to drastically reduce the services to
2 our participants and make a huge impact on access to
3 the programs and access for the participants.

4 And that's what we're here about. So
5 I just want us to look at this crisis that we've now
6 found in our lives and just reflect on how the
7 Advisory Board can help to uplift these essential
8 services. What role the Advisory Board can play in
9 it.

10 Just educating the stakeholders,
11 educating and decision making or decision makers in
12 this SNAP-Ed and WIC partnership world.
13 Strengthening our communication efforts and
14 alignment between SNAP-Ed and WIC. Just improving
15 our messaging to participants, trying to see how we
16 can continue to do more with less. We can continue
17 to support advocacy. That's a major one.

18 And just making sure that we are
19 sending a unified message just around the importance
20 of nutrition education as a whole. So whether it's
21 school food nutrition, senior food nutrition
22 program, farmers market, all of us work together for
23 the greater good. So supportive, coordinated
24 advocacy efforts really do help. So I just want to
25 take this a little bit of time to just open the

1 floor for any discussion, welcoming your thoughts,
2 any insight, any strategies or ideas of how we can
3 work to strengthen our advocacy.

4 If it's a little fresh and you want
5 to take some time, that's fine. You can shoot us at
6 email. But I wanted to give you all an opportunity
7 to just talk about how we can continue to support
8 these families. And I know that the families work
9 best when we are able to work together and just
10 enhance our network.

11 So anyone?

12 MR. DEITMAN: Sally, I actually do
13 have a question. It's not necessarily - it's just
14 more of a Q and A part. Is this going to modify or
15 change adjunctive eligibility for SNAP recipients?

16 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: That's a good
17 question. I don't know that answer now. I don't
18 know if Jessica Garvick will be able to speak to
19 that. I mean, I don't think, but -.

20 MS. GARVICK: Yeah, I don't think
21 this will. I don't think this will.

22 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: And for those
23 that may not quite understand Theodore's question
24 that are on the call. So in WIC, one of our
25 criteria is to be income eligible through or

1 eligible for the program through income. So in
2 order to show that, they bring their pay stubs, W2s,
3 and sometimes people fall outside of that. Income
4 guidelines are 185 percent of the poverty level.

5 If they fall outside of that, so what
6 happens if they're over income for the program? We
7 have something where that we call adjunctive
8 eligibility. Once a participant comes in and says
9 hey, I'm a Medicaid recipient or hey, I receive SNAP
10 benefits or temporary cash assistance. That makes
11 them adjunctively eligible. Now as far as medical
12 assistance, it does have to be Title V. There are
13 things that we do to confirm that they are WIC
14 eligible.

15 So what Theodore was asking was will
16 this negatively impact those who are coming in that
17 may be over income, but their SNAP benefit makes
18 them eligible for WIC automatically? And we believe
19 at this time that it should not have an effect.
20 Anyone else?

21 MS. SEIDEL: Yeah. Thinking about
22 what maybe we can do or what WIC programs can do. I
23 have heard that sometimes what's most meaningful to
24 Congress people are not all the data that we supply,
25 but stories from their constituents. So I would

1 think local WIC agencies, SNAP educators will be in
2 the position to hear people's comments about oh, I
3 really enjoyed being able to use my farmers market
4 checks at the WIC office. Why can't I do that
5 anymore?

6 This is how it affects me. So for
7 what it may be worth, maybe collecting these stories
8 is something that should be what people do.

9 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thanks.

10 MS. ZWERGEL: We've been doing that.
11 That's a part of advocacy you can do to share a
12 story. Right. From your perspective, from someone
13 using the services perspective, that goes a long
14 way. You can always invite them to come out and see
15 a farmer's market in action at your WIC clinic or
16 something else. So don't be afraid. They're just
17 people like us.

18 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Gerria has her
19 hand raised.

20 MS. COFFEE: Thank you. I was
21 wondering if WIC has been or will plan to
22 participate in any of the public health summits that
23 are being hosted by DHS and DOH. I became aware of
24 one where legislators will be present in coming
25 weeks in August, specifically in rural Pennsylvania,

1 which is an area of concern for all of us for lots
2 of reasons. Is this something that's on WIC's radar
3 to participate as part of, you know, our overall
4 work within DOH?

5 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: You can shoot
6 that information -.

7 CHAIR: I can address that.

8 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Okay.

9 CHAIR: So thank you for that
10 question. The Department of Health, as you said,
11 Department of Human Services, Department of Health
12 and others insurance. We're working in regional
13 efforts around getting folks in the region to think
14 about health not just as it is a vitally important
15 component of economic development in a community.

16 And those convenings are really being
17 led by local folks in those regions. So -. And at
18 this point it has been business leaders, as you
19 said, legislators, county leaders, healthcare
20 leaders. And there are some representations from -
21 it's not a lot of community based organizations at
22 this point. It tends to be some but not all. I
23 will say that I have been at all of them and WIC is
24 always top of my mind as I do oversee this Board.
25 And so I'm there.

1 Dr. Arkoosh is there and Dr. Bonacci,
2 who's my special advisor, is there. We did invite
3 to some of these as well, some of our state health
4 center leadership who also work very closely with
5 WIC. So, you know, we can't invite the entire world
6 to these convenings at this point because, you know,
7 we're trying to move a little bit of a needle.

8 But I do feel like community based
9 organizations are addressed and represented in some
10 way. And certainly WIC as a key program in the
11 Department of Health is represented by those of us
12 who are there. Not at the local agency level
13 perhaps, but certainly at the big picture is that
14 they are part of the healthcare continuum. And so
15 the - these are just first convenings.

16 There's a lot of take home work
17 that's supposed to happen by the folks who are
18 leading these groups and then there's work that
19 they're supposed to be doing afterwards. So the
20 convening is just the first meeting, but there's a
21 lot more work happening after that. You know, so
22 for instance, we do have our EMS folks coming to the
23 table because of their role that they play in
24 hospital drop off and moving people.

25 And as you get fewer hospitals once

1 hospitals close, EMS has to travel further. So we
2 do have their involvement. Again, I can't say that
3 it's a comprehensive engagement with community
4 organizations. It's really more government level
5 work at this point. So - but certainly WIC as part
6 of the continuum is not forgotten.

7 So I hope you'll believe that I am
8 well representing the WIC programs in these
9 discussions and certainly bring them up, but I don't
10 think that they're actually at the table for these.
11 There's a couple more. There's one this week
12 actually up in Bradford. Not Bradford, at Pitt,
13 Bradford.

14 There's another one in the beginning
15 of August in Williamsport and there's one in
16 September up in the Northeast. And I can't remember
17 where that is being located, but again, in each area
18 a particular group, local group, is organizing the
19 conversation and we're just there to participate,
20 but they're really running the show.

21 MS. COFFEE: Thank you, Dr. Bogen.

22 CHAIR: Perhaps more than you wanted
23 to know. Sorry.

24 MS. COFFEE: I'll be there. So I'll
25 see you soon.

1 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you, Dr.
2 Bogen. Any other questions or comments? All right,
3 before we move to open the floor, I just want to
4 take a moment to revisit the start of today's call.
5 We did not have a quorum present. That means that
6 we were not able to vote on approving the meeting
7 minutes from our previous call. So before
8 proceeding, I just want to ask if anyone joined
9 since our initial roll call.

10 If you have, if you can just state
11 your name for the record?

12 MR. BALOGA: Yeah, Alex Baloga. I
13 joined.

14 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you,
15 Alex. Anyone else join since roll call?

16 CHAIR: Do I count down the count,
17 Nick? That would make 10.

18 ATTORNEY KIGER: I only have nine.

19 CHAIR: Yeah, but I don't - I didn't
20 count myself.

21 ATTORNEY KIGER: Oh, no, no. Sorry.
22 You don't count, Secretary.

23 CHAIR: Yeah, I don't count towards
24 that. Sorry.

25 ATTORNEY KIGER: If we don't have 10,

1 we can just table this until the next meeting then.
2 And we'll just have these ones - the previous
3 meeting voted on with this meeting then.

4 MS. ZUBAIRU-COFIELD: Thank you. So
5 we'll just revisit this at our October meeting.
6 Thank you, Britney and Jessica, truly, truly
7 appreciate you all sharing those updates and that
8 information with us. And I'm confident that it's
9 going to give us something to go back and talk to
10 our partners on and just see how we can work to
11 improve these efforts.

12 Thank you all here for the amazing
13 engagement. And I'm going to move on to our eighth
14 and final order of business. And that's where we
15 provide the public with an opportunity to
16 participate in today's meeting. So is there anyone
17 from the public who's on the call that has any
18 questions, comments, concerns, anything that you
19 want to share? You can take the time to do so now
20 and feel free to use the chat if you need to. All
21 right.

22 I don't see any hands raised and
23 there's nothing in the chat. So I just want to
24 thank you all for attending today's meeting. Looks
25 like I can give you back 10 minutes of your time, so

1 hopefully you can do something for yourself in that
2 10 minutes. Please, please, please note that we are
3 no longer meeting monthly.

4 Our next meeting is going to be held
5 on October 28th and that will be at one o'clock. A
6 reminder that our meetings are virtual. They are
7 normally from one to two - one hour meetings. If
8 you would like to attend in person, we will be at
9 the Willow Oaks conference room and that's going to
10 be on 7th Street. The information is always in the
11 meeting agenda as well as the Teams invite.

12 So there is an opportunity for anyone
13 to attend in person. So if there's no questions or
14 comments or anything from anyone else, this meeting
15 is now adjourned. Thank you all.

16 * * * * *

17 HEARING CONCLUDED AT 1:51 P.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, a hearing held before Chair Bogen, was reported by me on July 22, 2025 and that I, Alexia CC Smith, read this transcript and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Dated the 11th day of August, 2025.



Alexia Smith,
Court Reporter