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News Release

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Immediate Release

WIC – More Than Just Food! It's Healthy Food!

May 7, 2014 – Kingsford/Iron River, Michigan. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has been providing the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) health and nutrition program to qualifying women (pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum), infants, and children (age 1 to 5 years) for more than 34 years! The minute a new WIC client walks in the door, they realize that the WIC office is more than just a place to get baby formula or to go for help with food!

WIC has evolved and changed with the times. WIC has stayed current with advancements in technology, in the area of nutritional science and breastfeeding, and in promoting effective behavior change. Today, more than ever, WIC offers the support that clients need to live healthy life-styles.

The WIC program has always provided healthy food benefits to its participants. The shopping lists for WIC participants identify the specific foods that the participants are allowed to purchase. Historically, the WIC food package has always provided good foods like cheese, milk, eggs, fruit juice, breakfast cereal, and peanut butter.

Over recent years, the WIC food package has been evolving to keep up with advancements in nutritional science. The WIC food packages, now give participants a defined number of dollars each month to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. Whole grain foods, like oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain tortillas, and whole grain breads have been added. Participants have a choice between peanut butter and dry or canned beans. Soy beverage is an available alternative for WIC participants who have an intolerance or allergy to dairy milk. Low fat milk and low fat cheese options are encouraged. Fruit juice remains on the food packages, but participants receive less juice per month. Infants continue to receive infant cereal, but now receive pureed fruits and pureed vegetables instead of fruit juice.

Another big change in WIC over recent years is that WIC is now known as a **breastfeeding program**, rather than a program where you can get infant formula for a baby. In Dickinson and Iron counties, breastfeeding is initiated immediately after birth for more than 90% of new born babies! A breast pump program has been introduced and is available to all breastfeeding post-partum moms enrolled in the program. Our local WIC agencies also have, on staff, an experienced breastfeeding mom who is available to teach all WIC women about breastfeeding and to support them thru their experience.

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Food choices matter! So if you thought WIC was just a food program, think again. WIC provides **healthy food**, nutrition education, **breastfeeding** support, and referrals, so that all participants can have better health and meet their individual nutritional goals.

To get help with healthy food and more, call the WIC office at 779-7212 (Dickinson County) or 265-4173 (Iron County).

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