

FAMILY CARE HEALTH CENTERS

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HEALTHY FAMILIES START WITH WIC, A NUTRITION PROGRAM AT FAMILY CARE HEALTH CENTERS

For Immediate Release

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Family Care Health Centers has announced that a contract to continue to provide WIC services for fiscal year 2012 has been signed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Under the terms of the contract, Family Care Health Centers will be serving 29,400 eligible clients annually. Standards for participation in the WIC program are the same for everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or handicap. Eligibility is based on a health assessment and financial standards of \$41,348 annual income for a family of four.

WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **Women, Infants and Children**, provides at no cost specific nutritious supplemental foods and nutrition education to pregnant and breastfeeding women, women that recently had their baby, infants, and children to age five. WIC participants are persons who meet WIC income guidelines and are determined by health professionals to be at nutritional risk.

WIC Supplemental Food Prescriptions are specifically chosen to promote and support successful long term breastfeeding, encourage whole grains and fiber, increase fruit and vegetable consumption, support a low-fat diet and limit added sugars and sodium. Eligible women and children receive fortified milk and cheese, eggs, whole grain cereal, fruit juices high in vitamin C, dry/canned beans or peanut butter, whole wheat/whole grain bread or tortillas and a cash voucher for fruits and vegetables. Infants receive iron-fortified infant cereal and jars of fruits and vegetables when developmentally appropriate. When breastfeeding is not chosen or possible, WIC offers a partial supply of iron fortified infant formula. Participants are issued checks to buy these foods at authorized local retail stores.

The WIC program promotes breastfeeding for at least 12 months. Family Care Health Centers offers breastfeeding education to all eligible expectant mothers. A Certified Lactation Consultant provides one-on-one breastfeeding guidance. Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provide additional social support to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

By improving the diets of low income women, infants and children and providing breastfeeding support, the WIC program at Family Care Health Centers improves the health status of a vulnerable population during critical periods of growth.

There are several agencies providing WIC services in the metropolitan area. Eligible participants from the St. Louis city or neighboring counties may enroll or transfer to the WIC agency of their choice. Family Care Health Centers are located at 401 Holly Hills Ave, 63111 in the Carondelet community, and 4352 Manchester, 63110, in the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood. Hours include evenings, Saturdays and "call ahead" appointments. Persons interested or in need of more information should contact Family Care Health Centers at 314-353-5190 (Carondelet location) or 314-531-5444 (Forest Park Southeast location).

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