

**Title of Project:** California WIC's Nutrition Triage Matrix Issues (Poster Session/Resource Allocation)

**Agency Name:** California State WIC Program

**Description of Project/Poster Session:**

The Triage Matrix Issues Committee (TMIC) was established to address the problems and concerns raised regarding the implementation of the Triage Matrix in California WIC's Integrated Statewide Information Systems (ISIS) in July 1999. Our poster session will provide an overview of the many issues and projects that the TMIC is currently working on or plans to address in the future.

Background

In California, we developed a triage matrix and programmed our automated participant services software (ISIS) to automatically assign an intervention level based on the participant's nutrition risks. The following 4 nutrition intervention levels classify each nutritional risk:

- Levels 1 and 2      Low to Moderate Intervention Levels. Participants receive routine WIC services: nutrition education at certification periods and at follow-up contacts performed by Competent Professional Authority (CPA) and monitored by RD.
- Level 3            Higher Intervention Level. Participant receives assessment, nutrition education, and an individual nutrition education plan from the WIC RD.
- Level 4            Complex Intervention Level. Participant receives assessment, coordination, referral and modification of the WIC food package by the WIC RD. The WIC RD reinforces the medical care plan provided by the health care system RD, and facilitates access to and communication with the RD providing Medical Nutrition Therapy MNT services. These functions make up the components of the Individual Education Plan.

We used the 1992 Institute of Medicine report Nutrition Services in Perinatal Care, and the ICD9 codes for reimbursement to MediCal (Medicaid) to help determine which intervention level to assign the various nutrition risks.

**Status of Current TMIC Projects:**

For our poster session, we would like to share the many issues and projects we have undertaken to refine the use of the triage matrix system and to effectively use our staff resources. The following topics are included in the California WIC poster session:

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) Referral Pilot Project - TMIC designed a 6 month pilot project referring level 4 participants to providers for MNT and tracking the outcome. Methodology and results will be presented.

Nutrition Education Intervention Guidelines for Level 3 and 4 Participants TMIC developed protocols for local WIC agencies to use for training staff RDs and improving delivery of consistent nutrition information. Samples will be available.

Role of Registered Dietitians (RD) and Nutrition Degreed Non-RDs in WIC: California WIC supports the "Registered Dietitian" as the gold standard for providing the highest level of nutrition intervention to WIC participants. However, as a result of the improved identification of level 3 and 4 risk codes coupled with a statewide shortage of WIC RDs, several local agencies have had difficulty complying with the policy that requires RDs to see all of the level 3 and 4 WIC participants. TMIC is in the process of developing criteria which would allow candidates holding degrees in nutrition to provide nutrition intervention for level 3 participants.

ISIS Enhancement Screen: Individual Nutrition Education Plan: Implementation of the ISIS Individual Nutrition Education Plan (INEP) screen will be complete on August 27, 2001. The new screen will standardize documentation, promote consistent, efficient communication within and between local WIC agencies, and provide more comprehensive, effective individual nutrition education plans for WIC participants.

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