

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LEADING THE WAY IN WIC EFFICIENCIES**

*~Electronic system to improve access to healthy food for Florida's children~*

**MIAMI** – State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong today joined with State Representative Jose Felix Diaz, District 116, and Florida Department of Health-Miami-Dade Administrator Dr. Lillian Rivera to publicly launch the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program's transition to an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system. Today's ribbon cutting ceremony took place at Florida Baby Food Center, a WIC grocery store in Miami. A pilot project in Miami-Dade County began on July 1 as a part of the statewide rollout of EBT to better serve Florida's families in need.

"Today's launch is a great achievement for Florida's families in need," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "WIC EBT makes it easier to connect nutritious foods offered through WIC to healthier outcomes for babies, kids, and moms."

"I am pleased to see WIC transition to an electronic benefits model which will be more efficient, cost-effective, and reliable," said Representative Jose Felix Diaz, who serves Florida's 116th House District. "WIC is supposed to help families live healthier lives, and that goal could not become a reality without small business owners and community leaders that are willing to provide a service by accepting WIC and other electronic benefits."

The event recognized a milestone in that Florida was the first state to simultaneously implement a new WIC participant data system and bring EBT services online, accomplishing both projects in less than a year. The transition from paper checks to WIC EBT delivers benefits more efficiently to families as well as Florida's 2,000 WIC authorized grocers. Paper checks will no longer be required and the electronic card will allow for faster checkout times and easier processing of benefits.

With the EBT, Florida's authorized WIC grocers will see as much as a 90 percent reduction in processing costs. The new electronic accounts virtually eliminate the need for manual processing and WIC will be able to reimburse the grocer for foods purchased within one business day, significantly reducing the reimbursement time period.

WIC is a federally funded program that provides healthy food, as well as breastfeeding education and nutrition counseling to needy families. Florida's WIC Program operates 220 sites throughout the state where families improve their diet and food choices with the assistance of licensed nutritionists and nutrition educators. WIC aims to improve the health of pregnant women, new mothers, and their children from birth to five years of age by providing the best nutrition possible to help them learn and be successful in school and society.

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