

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**

December 29, 2014

**Contact:** Communications Office

(850) 245-4111

**FLORIDA WIC STRENGTHENING FAMILIES FOR 40 YEARS**

**TALLAHASSEE** – This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, more commonly known as the WIC Program. The WIC Program is funded by the United State Department of Agriculture and was established in 1974 to improve the health of the nation’s children during times of critical growth and development.

“I congratulate the Florida WIC Program for 40 years of service to keep Florida families healthy,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “In partnership with local grocers, WIC has improved the health of women, children, and babies, while becoming more efficient through a system of electronic benefit transfer (EBT).”

Florida WIC provides services to pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to their fifth birthday based on nutritional risk and income eligibility. The primary services provided are nutrition screening, risk assessment, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support and referrals to healthcare and other social services. Nutritious supplemental food is provided at no cost to participants.

Over the past four decades, studies have shown that pregnant women who enroll in WIC during the early months of pregnancy have fewer low birth weight babies, experience fewer infant deaths, see the doctor earlier in pregnancy and eat healthier. WIC participation by infants and children is associated with improved diets, including increased nutrient intake (or intakes of iron, potassium, and fiber), fewer added sugars, and a greater variety of foods.

Earlier this year Florida WIC implemented a statewide data system that provides participants with greater flexibility in redeeming benefits and increases benefits security. The new system uses an electronic card much like a credit card rather than the paper checks used previously. Florida is the first state to simultaneously implement a new WIC participant data system and bring Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) services online. Implementation of WIC EBT helps 475,000 WIC participants and 2,000 grocers.

Florida WIC is administered through the Florida Department of Health and is available in all 67 counties. To learn more about the WIC Program or to find out if you are eligible, call toll-free at 1-800-342-3556 or visit your local WIC office by finding the location here: [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org).

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

###