

WIC Program Gives Nutritional Prescriptions and Support



WIC Director Susan Stephenson-Martin, MS.

Keeping the pantry well-stocked can be a challenge, especially for expectant mothers and those with children under the age of 5. Enter the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). This service operates across America, helping over 7 million people monthly, including 53 percent of all infants. The Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) clinic assists around 4,580 of the eligible participants — and that number continues to grow.

As WIC Director, Susan Stephenson-Martin explains, “We offer supplemental foods, and education about nutrition breastfeeding. We screen for iron blood levels and to assess whether clients are anemic. And we can give referrals for HIV testing, pregnancy testing and lead testing.” The staff also

guides patients toward accessing assistance with dentistry, domestic abuse, age milestones and childhood cognitive or learning disabilities.

WIC works with clients who are low-income and also at nutritional risk. “They come in every three months and receive nutrition education each time,” Stephenson-Martin says. “We examine their height, weight and blood through a finger-prick test. We look at whether their weight fluctuated and assess pre-existing conditions like preeclampsia or gestational diabetes, along with issues like pica or excessive vomiting. Then we can use medical data and interview questions to determine a specific food prescription.”

Obesity and anemia remain the most common challenges at the Rutgers clinic. “In the urban environment, there can be excessive lead in the water or paint, which can reduce iron absorption. High-iron foods tend to be fish, liver, red meat and dark green leafy greens — foods children may not want to eat — and ones a lot of low-income people might not have access to. So we might suggest fortified cereals.”

Whatever their individual prescription, clients receive a WIC check that indicates the types and amounts of groceries the can access for free. “Mostly that’s grains, dairy, vegetables and proteins like beans and peanut butter — the USDA MyPlate, if you will,” Stephenson-Martin says. “We’ve just started to offer yogurt too. Clients are very excited about it!”

The Rutgers program also includes a lactation consultant on its 13-person team and has been an integral part of increasing breastfeeding not just in Essex County, but across the state. That’s especially important for non-Hispanic blacks, who struggle with a higher rate of infant mortality: 8.8 deaths per thousand people versus just 2.7 for Caucasians. In the Newark area, those rates decrease for African-American babies who are breastfed — a phenomenon researchers are still exploring.

WIC will extend its scope even further this spring, explains the program’s medical director, Hanan Tanuos, MD: “We’re opening another satellite clinic in the department of pediatrics. It will be very easy to serve the children while they’re already here and not require another visit.”

Stephenson-Martin adds: “The synergy between Rutgers NJMS, a state school, and WIC, a state program, is wonderful. Physicians are servicing clients, the medical school is training doctors and dentists, and we’re one of the outpatient clinics at the grassroots level able to provide supplemental help. We’re another way to assist the community in which Rutgers resides.”

Get more insight into this valuable program at <http://njms.rutgers.edu/departments/pediatrics/WIC.cfm> and watch this short video: http://bit.ly/NJMS_WIC.

You can visit the WIC program on Mondays and Thursdays at the OB/GYN clinic at the Ambulatory Care Center, 140 Bergen St., Newark.



National Nurses Week

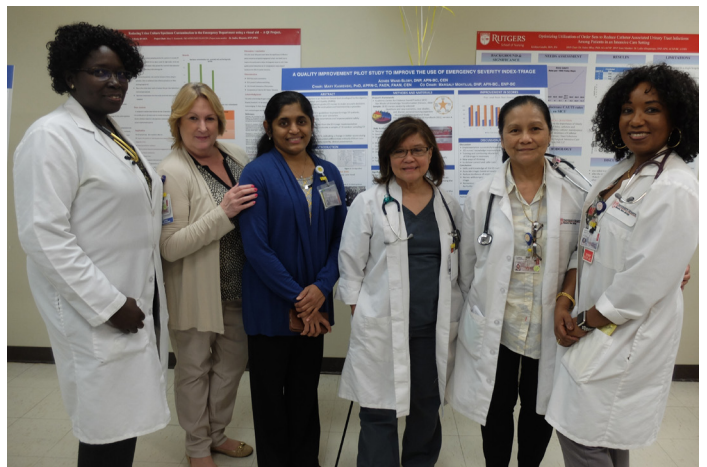


recognizing National Nurses Week.

This year's festivities got underway with a Kick Off Breakfast and reception with a welcome from Chief Nursing Officer Carl Kirton, DNP, RN, MBA, followed by an afternoon tea reception for Certified Nurses.

Stacy Rose Rosales, a work and life balance coach, delivered remarks on "Wellness and Mindfulness" at a nurse leader luncheon. The festivities concluded with a keynote address by Dr. Edna Cadmus, RN, of the Rutgers University School of Nursing.

Unit-based celebrations were held for the night shift nurses.



University Hospital celebrated National Nurses Week, one of the biggest events of the year, with a host of events, treats and honors. The theme for 2019 National Nurses Week, sponsored by the American Nurses Association, was "4 Million Reasons to Celebrate." Nicole Sardinas, Director of Education and Professional Development, and her team organized this year's UH celebration.

Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, a public health nurse, visited UH to present a Joint Legislative Resolution