

Remote Mid-Certification Health Assessment During Disaster – Staff Reference

(Remote throughout this document means by phone)

This Staff Reference is for Mid-certifications and Mid-Pregnancy visits during a disaster. It contains information and guidance that is allowed during the disaster declaration.

Policy: To allow the Certifier to complete a mid-certification and mid-pregnancy health assessment without the participant being physically present due to disaster-related events.

During the remote mid-certification health assessment, the Certifier must:

1. Follow-up on previous nutrition risks and concerns identified at the certification.
2. Conduct a brief assessment of health and nutrition practices.
3. Anthropometrics can be deferred or left blank.
4. Offer nutrition education and breastfeeding support, as appropriate.
5. Refer to other social and health programs, as appropriate.
6. Confirm the current food benefits meet the participant's needs.
7. Complete a breastfeeding review if there is a change in the breastfeeding participant's and infant's food benefits.

Procedure:

When confirming appointment time by phone or email, direct applicant to the WIC webpage which contains the Rights and Responsibilities, Vermont WIC Foods Guide, WIC Program and Shopping Guide and other information that will be helpful during the phone certification.

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic>

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/cyf_WIC_VT-WIC-Foods-2019-2021.pdf

https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/cyf_WIC_program_guide.pdf

The Certifier completes the contact by phone. Ensure participant, parent or caregiver is in a safe location (i.e. not driving). For participants with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or who are hard of hearing, staff should use the interpreter services available.

Staff must not withhold WIC food benefits if the participant misses the mid-certification health assessment appointment. Provide one month of food benefits and reschedule the appointment for the following month.

The Certifier will:

- A. Give a brief description of the mid-certification or mid-pregnancy health assessment process. Let the participant know the information is confidential and how long the appointment will take.
 - a. Let the participant know you'll ask questions about potentially personal information so they can decide if they're in an area where they can answer these questions.
 - b. Let the participant know staff will enter the information into a computer so they're aware of what is occurring during the interaction.

Family/Intake:

- B. Identity – For Proof of Identity, Choose Tele-WIC Midcert. Select “No” for Physical Presence and choose “Disaster” as reason in Reason drop down
- C. Residency, income and voter registration screens are not required at mid-certification.

Assessment:

Complete a health assessment including:

- D. Measurements – height or length and weight.
 - a. Enter weight, length and height information if the participant has information available from Health Care Provider within the past 60 days. **If unavailable, do not complete the Anthropometric screen in Ceres.**
- E. Blood
 - a. Document hemoglobin/hematocrit value if available from health care provider if taken within 90 days of the certification date, and represents current category (pregnant, postpartum). **If not available, leave screen blank in Ceres.**
- F. Nutrition Interview
 - a. Follow-up on nutrition risks and concerns identified at the certification.
 - b. Ask the health assessment questions on the nutrition interview screen in Ceres to assess for any new health or nutrition issues.
 - c. Inquire about the participant's needs and concerns. Follow-up on nutrition, and breastfeeding goals and discussions documented during the certification period.

- d. Offer appropriate referrals and follow-up on previous referrals.
- e. Provide, as appropriate, breastfeeding support.
- f. Limit education to one topic, addressing high risks as needed, and set goals with the participant, parent, guardian or caretaker as appropriate.

G. Risk

- a. Assign any new risk factors.

Education and Care:

- H. Discuss and document referrals.
- I. Document Nutrition Education topics discussed, and materials provided.
- J. Complete Care Plan

Foods:

- K. Address any food package changes needed
- L. Issue food benefits.
 - a. Issue food benefits for the appropriate number of months based on required documentation and next appointment needs.
 - b. **Choose No Signature available and select Disaster in drop down.**
 - c. Offer to mail the Family Food Benefit List
- M. Offer WIC shopping education and information about how to use the WIC card as needed.
 - a. If needed, ask if the participant can view the Vermont WIC Foods Guide and Shopping Videos on the **WIC Phone Appointments** page on the Vermont WIC website, to see the foods while Certifiers review them on the phone during the phone appointment.
 - b. Encourage the participant to consider the WIC Shopper App.
 - c. Opt families into shopping video text message series if needed
 - d. Mailing of replacement WIC cards can be offered while staff are performing duties from the local office. Another system of providing the card to a family can be determined at the local level as needed.
- N. Let the participant, parent, or caregiver know:
 - a. When their next appointment is based on their needs and if any missing documentation is required.

- b. What to bring to the next appointment, for example missing proofs, iron test results, or current measurements.
 - c. They can transfer their WIC eligibility if they move within the state and can be provide a Verification of Certification (VOC) if they move out of state.
- O. Thank the participant for using WIC and provide the local office phone number for any follow up questions.
- P. Remind families as needed to check local Facebook page, WIC website and VDH website for additional information. Offer WICHealth.org as a resource as needed.
- Q. **Consent Forms** – If a new consent form is needed, please go over the consent form with the family via phone and check off any partners they agree to on the Authorization to Share Information (Consent) Form.
- a. Explain to family that you will mail the form to them with a stamped envelope and they can mail back. If not received, we will wait until an in-person visit.

Additional guidance for working and conducting phone appointments when not located at the local WIC office, per AHS and ADS :

1. Employees should not be taking multifunction printers or copiers home-- please encourage paperlessness with your staff especially with confidential information as there are no secureshred bins at homes. Printing to pdf is a good alternative.
2. Remote location internet connectivity is the responsibility of the employee. Employees can work with business offices directly to activate tethering on phones or mifi devices where approved by the departments. Unfortunately, we don't have the capability to help troubleshoot home internet connections so rely on your internet provider for this sort of basic connection help. If you can get on the internet with help from your provider, you should be good to go.
3. Please don't use personal portable storage drives such as USB flash drives or external hard drives unless they are state-provided and encrypted.
4. Change your password now here at work proactively. It is not easy to change your password at home if it is expired. To do this, press ctrl-alt-delete, then select change password. Make sure you remember it!

Here is the official guidance from AHS for teleworking with Confidential Information, Protected Health Information (PHI), and Personally Identifiable Information (PII):

Keep your work physically secure

- Do not run errands or leave your car unattended with your laptop or files containing confidential information, PHI, or PII inside
- Keep your laptop in a secure, locked location when unattended

Unless approved by your supervisor, do not create or use confidential information, PHI, or PII in paper form

- Do not print records containing confidential information, PHI, or PII
- Do not remove paper records containing confidential information, PHI, or PII from State offices
- Do not include identifying information in handwritten notes

If it is necessary to handle confidential information, PHI, or PII in paper form:

- Your supervisor must approve the use of paper documents containing confidential information, PHI, or PII in your home
- All paper copies of confidential information, PHI, or PII must be kept in a locked briefcase or secure locking container when not in use
- Do not shred documents contain confidential information, PHI, or PII at home locations. Those documents must be returned to State offices for shredding

Make sure your family and household members do not have access to and cannot read confidential information, PHI, or PII.

- Password-lock your computer when unattended
- Avoid conducting business on the phone within earshot of family members
- Arrange monitors and computer screens so they are not visible to other family members

Ensure that appropriate technological safeguards are in place

- Use only password-protected wireless connections that are not shared with anyone outside your household
- Avoid emailing files containing confidential information, PHI, or PII to yourself and do not store those files on your laptop or unencrypted removable media (Encrypted flash drives must be approved by ADS)

Please contact the AHS Privacy Office if you have questions about how to handle confidential information, PHI, or PII from your home location.

AHS Privacy Office: Phone: 802-241-0225 Email: AHS.PrivacyAndSecurity@vermont.gov