




WIC EBT 201

Elements of Successful WIC EBT Implementations

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Workshop Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Milestones
- WIC EBT Regulation Impact on Implementation
- Joint MIS/EBT Implementations
- Vendor Engagement and Enablement
- Clinic Readiness



MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONES


(THE ONES YOU KNOW ABOUT)




Project Milestones

- Milestones related to the APD Process:
 - Joint APD and APDU approvals
 - Funding
 - Contractual (RFP's, Contracts, etc.)
 - Time 'on the street'
- Critical Project Dates
 - Vendor enablement (Ellen will speak more to this later in presentation)
 - Setting UAT, Pilot and Rollout dates – Go/No Go
- These milestones should be linked to tasks supporting their completion
- Know your critical path





MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONES *(YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT)*



Time Sensitive Project Milestones

- There are some project milestones that are more critical than expected
- These have come as a surprise to some states as they were implementing
- Make sure to identify these as milestones and link tasks that are contingent on their completion



APL Ready for Vendor Testing

- Test APL
 - *Many chain vendors want a production-ready APL up to three months prior to pilot to use in testing and preparation for pilot*
 - Recommended to be an APL that is complete as possible for Pilot
 - Should not be from a test environment or include fake or invalid items
 - More products can be added after this point
- Complete Production APL
 - *Some vendors will need this up to 6 weeks prior to go live*



Go Live

- Often mistaken for the date on which cards will begin to be issued
- It is actually when live buys (level 3 certifications) begin onsite at vendor locations, 3 – 4 weeks before pilot
- Means that MIS must be in production to support:
 - *Sending production Cat/Subcat, UPC/PLU and Vendor files to eWIC processor*
 - *Establishing accounts, issuing cards and issuing benefits (often compliance or educational accounts)*
 - *Process daily batch files from eWIC processor*



Cats/Subcats Set Up

- If integrated voice response system (IVR) is used subcat descriptions must be finalized so they can be recorded, recommend finalizing no later than three months prior to pilot
- Cat/Subcat set up is not always straight forward, there are choices that can be made, choices will impact:
 - *Participant choice in the store*
 - *Level of participant education needed*
 - *NTE calculations*



Card Design/Production

- Card design and production takes much longer you would think
 - *Must have BIN/IIN Development and approval of design*
 - *Production takes several weeks*
- Obtain your BIN/IIN as soon as possible, can be done before eWIC contractor on board (requires application to ANSI)
- Have design or concept prior to eWIC contractor kick off
- In addition to card production, the design impacts training and other materials where the card would be displayed





WIC EBT REGULATION IMPACT ON IMPLEMENTATION



Rule Highlights

- Provisions of the EBT regulation
- Clarification/Definition of WIC EBT terms
- State Plan
- Card Replacement Requirements
- Retailer Enablement/Equipment
 - *Single-Function Equipment Support*
 - *Multi-Function Equipment Cost Sharing*

***See agenda for Monday November 6: 4:15 – 5:30 p.m. for a presentation by Jessica Owen Day from WEB and Claire Brown – NERO: EBT equipment Costs: Who pays what, when?



Provisions of the EBT Regulation Final: March 1, 2016

- Statewide by October 1, 2020
- All State agencies submit planning for EBT by August 1, 2016
- May 2, 2016 is the effective date States assume the cost of the single-function equipment
- March 1, 2018 is the effective date when a State agency is will support multi-function equipment costs for any vendor determined to be necessary for access.
- Effective March 1, 2017, Determine if consistent with regulatory requirement to meet terms of retailer equipage
- Effective March 1, 2018: Systems support Operating Rules/Technical Standards and any other industry standards as identified by the Secretary



Clarification/Definition of WIC EBT terms

SOME of the definitions in WIC EBT Regulation

- Statewide EBT
- Multi-function equipment
- Single-function equipment
- WIC EBT capable



State Plan

- Must include:
 - *Goals and objectives related to WIC EBT*
 - *How agency will meet timeframes for card replacement*
 - *How agency will address WIC EBT customer service during non-business hours*
 - *How agency will ensure health and nutrition assessments when certified for a period of greater than six months*



Card Replacement Requirements

- Cards must be replaced within seven business days of notice from a participant
 - *Impact: Mailed replacements may be impacted by time limit*

- A State agency shall respond to a report of a lost, stolen, or damaged card within one business day
 - *Impact: Not all state agencies have a 24/7 help line*
 - *Impact: Processes are needed for participants to report lost/stolen/damaged cards and for state agency staff to act on it within 24 hours*
 - *Voice mail acceptable*



Vendor Enablement

- Minimum Lane Coverage
 - *Impact: Agencies need to follow formula; a different formula may be used if approved by FNS*
- State Agency Required to Pay for **Single Function** Equipment
 - *Paid by state agency during implementation and continuing after EBT statewide; 'lifetime commitment'*
 - *State agency may choose not to offer a single function option*
 - *Impacts: Ongoing costs and effort for maintaining devices*



Vendor Enablement: Statewide

- WIC EBT Capable Vendors
 - *Prospective vendor must demonstrate they are WIC EBT capable prior to authorization by the state agency*
 - *Two part authorization process allowed*
 - *Impact: Policy and vendor authorization processes will be updated*

- Exceptions
 - *For the majority of the vendor requirements there are exceptions if a vendor is needed for participant access*



Vendor Enablement

- Multi-Function Device Cost Sharing
 - *Cost sharing available during implementation only*
 - *Post-statewide costs borne by vendor unless necessary for participant access*
 - *State agency defines cost sharing methodology, requires FNS approval*

- Impacts:
 - *Cost sharing plan must be developed (included in IAPD or separately) and implemented*
 - *IAPD budget may need updating if cost sharing funds not included*
 - *State agencies must determine the mechanism for distributing funds to vendors (i.e., grant applications, sole source contracts)*



Cost Sharing Plan

- Submitted to and approved by FNS
- Must include how the State agency intends to address cost sharing with vendors:
 - *Approach to distribution of funding for multi-function (pre-statewide) and single-function vendors*
 - *Criteria for the provision of funding*
- No specific template defined; recommend asking other states or Regional Office for samples





VENDOR ENGAGEMENT AND ENABLEMENT



Information Gathering

- If you have not done it already, gather information about:
 - *Type of cash register system*
 - *Who supports their cash register*
 - *What company supports credit/debit/EBT processing*
- This information assists in assessing integration capabilities
- Information can be gathered initially by state agency or planning contractor during planning phase
- If processing services are contracted, the contractor is on board they can build on information previously gathered



Communication

- Probably not the first time you have heard about the importance of communication: Early, Often and repeat.
- Not all vendors are the same, need to consider
 - *Audience – store types / owners can vary significantly*
 - *Methods – many modes available*
 - *Timing – Information may need different focus depending on point in time in the project*



Key Messages/Information

- Project schedule / timeline
- Vendor Moratorium
- Contact information
- Vendor Go Live is when the stores need to be ready for level 3 / live testing, not when the clinic goes live, could be 3 - 4 weeks before clinic start
- Cashier training is critical, it has sometimes been overlooked considering eWIC to be “just another tender type.”
- Don't forget to include FNS in your communications, they will want to understand your plans and stay apprised of your progress



Training is Critical

- Integrated vendors are trained by chain or retail system providers
 - *Often use a train the trainer approach*
 - *Cashiers may not work everyday, may miss training*
- Stand-beside (single-function) typically trained by eWIC processor
- It is recommended the EBT processor and/or the state agency monitor training and readiness through:
 - *Phone contact with each location*
 - *Test buys which provide opportunities for staff to see transactions and ask questions*



Key Activities

- Determining Integration Status
- Communications
- Updates/Upgrades/Installations
- Testing systems prior to go live
- Providing test APL – ideally 3 months before go live
- Providing production APL – ideally no later than 6 weeks before go live
- Go live is not when clinics begin issuing eWIC, it is when vendors need to be ready for live test buys (level 3 certifications)





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CLINIC READINESS



Planning for New Functions / Workflow

- Implementing WIC EBT results in some changes in the clinic, new or modified areas are:
 - *Benefit Issuance/Changes*
 - *Cards and PINs*
 - *Troubleshooting*



Benefit Issuance / Changes

- From user perspective, typically everything is the same as paper issuance up to the point where checks would be printed
- Benefits and cards can be issued at the same time or at different points during the appointment
- Benefit changes for current benefits require access to balance



Cards and PINs

- Initial Issuance
 - *Online: can be independent of benefit issuance and PIN selection; PIN selection typically done by phone*
 - *Smart Card: card/benefit issuance and PIN selection done at the same time using card reader/writer*
- Replacement
 - *Online: can be done at any time; PIN carries over to new card; PIN changes can be done by phone*
 - *Smart Card: requires waiting period; benefits and PIN must be added to new card; PIN changes must be done in the clinic*
- Card inventory will be maintained by each clinic, similar process to check stock inventory, but significantly less items; often stored in locked file cabinet



Troubleshooting Activities

- Participants may have questions about their card or account
 - *What is my balance?*
 - *What happened to my benefits? I thought I had more in my account.*
 - *Why did my card not work at the store?*
- Depending on technology or state decision, there may be customer service support available by phone or a web portal at an additional cost
- There will be information available to clinic staff to assist participants:
 - *Access to balance (from smart card or online e-WIC system)*
 - *Access to transaction history information*
 - *Access to card status information*





JOINT MIS/EBT IMPLEMENTATION



Get Organized

- Integrated IAPD
- Integrated Schedule
- If applicable, PM and QA RFPS first, then EBT/MIS RFPS
- Start MIS and EBT Contracts at the Same Time
- Start Early on Your UPC Database
- Essential All Contractors Work Together
- Put Other Priorities On Hold



Best Practices for Success

- Give Senior Management Project Ownership
- Communication Plan: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How
- Request Guidance from FNS From the Beginning
- Risk Management
- Conduct Due Diligence and be Flexible
- Commit Staff Resources to Project Tasks
- Appoint Individuals to Lead the Document Development and Review Process





QUESTIONS?

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