

January 6, 2017

To: Oregon Health Care Providers
From: Sue Woodbury
RE: **2017 Oregon WIC alternative standard infant formulas**

Dear Health Care Partner:

On behalf of the Nutrition & Health Screening Program for Women, Infants and Children, (Oregon WIC), thank you for your partnership in referring your eligible patients and families to WIC and your hard work to help coordinate care for our shared patients.

On January 3, 2017 the Oregon WIC Program added the following formulas back to its approved formula list:

- Similac Sensitive (powder and ready-to-feed in quarts)
- Similac Total Comfort (powder)



Action needed:

You will need to complete a WIC medical documentation form (MDF) if you feel your pediatric patient may benefit from one of these formulas. The MDF has been updated to include a section specific to these formulas identified as “Alternative 19 calorie/ounce infant formulas”. The form can be found online at:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/providers.aspx> as well as included with this letter.

Why did WIC stop offering these formulas for a period of time?

In 2014, Abbott, the manufacturer of the Similac product line reformulated their standard infant formulas to be 19 calories per ounce. According to federal requirements, standard infant formulas offered by WIC must meet the Standard of Identity set by the Food and Drug Agency (FDA).

The Standard of Identity for standard infant formulas must:

- Provide at least 20 calories per fluid ounce at standard dilution
- Provide at least 10 mg iron per liter standard dilution
- Not require the addition of any ingredient other than water prior to being served
- Meet the FDA definition and requirements for infant formula
- Must be designed to be administered through an enteral route (oral or tube feeding)

Since this change meant that these formulas no longer met the requirements of standard infant formula, the issuance of these formulas require a WIC MDF stating that a health care provider with prescriptive authority approves the use of a 19 calorie/ounce formula. We knew this would be confusing to our health care partners and to our families. We also knew that these products were being over requested, often in response to normal baby behaviors of spitting up, changes in stooling, perceived “intolerance”. As a result, the State WIC office made the difficult decision to remove these formulas from our formulary. Training and education on baby behaviors and infant cues were provided to WIC staff and families to support breastfeeding or the use of standard infant formulas rather than the alternative formulas.

During this time we monitored the issuance of other, more expensive, medical formulas, and also listened to our staff and families. We recognized that removal of these formulas became an equity issue and financial burden for many of our families. We trust that by bringing these formulas back, we can work with our partners, WIC staff and families to use these formulas appropriately and to remain dedicated to supporting normal, healthy baby behaviors and developmental feeding cues.

Thank you for your support in making this change a positive one. If you have any questions, please contact your local WIC agency or Cheryl Alto, MS, RD, at the State WIC office. Cheryl.1.alto@state.or.us or 971-673-0057. To find your local WIC office and/or other resources regarding WIC in Oregon, please visit our webpage:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/countyinfo.aspx>