



Operational Guideline

Product Distribution

Approved by:
Community Health Leadership Team
Public Health Nursing Practice Council
Population and Public Health

Pages:

6

Approval Date:

Updated
26 Oct 2013
28 Oct 2022

Supersedes (if applicable)

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1.0 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to outline principles for consideration when distributing products to clients, as well as associated messaging.
- 1.2 To provide direction to ensure consistent distribution of products across sites and in conjunction with program and client health goals.

2.0 SCOPE:

- 2.1 This guideline applies to Public Health Nurses (PHN), Families First Home Visitors (FFHV) and any other employees with direct client contact.

3.0 BACKGROUND:

- 3.1 Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) employees use a wide variety of products in working with clients. Products may be purchased directly from suppliers, accessed through logistics, or freely donated by government or private for and not-for profit agencies.

4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 Product: For the purposes of this guideline, a product will be defined as any item given to a client by a WRHA Public Health staff member in the course of their professional interaction.

5.0 PROCEDURE:

- 5.1 Prior to acquiring or distributing a product to an individual, family or community, WRHA community staff should apply the following principles:

- Support client safety or reduce harm
- Avoid product endorsement
- Use of the product is evidence based and consistent with program objectives
- Avoid imposing personal values, beliefs and prejudices (e.g. racial biases, gender biases, religious biases)
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Employ effective supply management

- 5.2.0 In particular, prior to distributing products to clients, WRHA Community Staff must:



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- 5.2.1 Adhere to the WRHA Conflict of Interest policy (# 20.10.11) and the WRHA Industry Relations policy (# 10.00.110).
<http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/industryrelationship.php>.
- 5.2.2 Comply with the WRHA Baby Friendly Initiative and the World Health Organization (WHO) International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes
<http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241541601/en/>.
- 5.2.3 Encourage clients to build capacity and foster problem solving. This is especially important where distribution of the product cannot be sustained by the organization.
- 5.2.4 Weigh the benefit against the potential harm to clients in providing the product. Safety and harm reduction are always primary considerations.
- 5.2.5 Obtain program supplies through logistics and ensure that products are equally accessible to all community areas by being added to the approved list. If staff need access to products not on the approved list, there should be consultation with the Community Area Team Manager and/or the Clinical Nurse Specialist so the item can be added.
- 5.2.6 Be consistent with the goals and direction of the WRHA, the program, and as well the needs and goals of the client.
- 5.2.7 Apply evidence in decisions to acquire and distribute products. Evidence-informed research is published in peer-reviewed journals, or is available from reputable agencies/organizations.
- 5.2.8 Be given to clients with a statement of non-endorsement. Products are not distributed by WRHA Community employees for the purposes of endorsing a specific product.

6.0 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 In special circumstances, consideration may be given to distributing products known as enablers or incentives, which are intended to build relationships with clients and community partners. Enablers and incentives should adhere to team and program goals and be used in a consistent manner.

6.2 Effective supply management of products should be a consideration. Prior to ordering products or supplies consider:

- The demand of product within the office

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- The amount of product within the package or box (e.g., 24 per box or 1000 per box)
- The expiry-date

In the unlikely event an office has a surplus of product nearing expiration, in consultation with the Team Manager, alternative means for distributing the product should be considered, but within the parameters of this guideline.

VALIDATION, REFERENCES, OR RESOURCES:

WHO Baby Friendly Initiative: <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/bfhi/en/>


WHO International Code for Marketing Breastfeeding Substitutes:
<http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241541601/en/>

WRHA Conflict of Interest policy: <http://www.wrha.mb.ca/about/policy/files/20.10.011.pdf>

WRHA Harm Reduction Position Statement:
http://www.wrha.mb.ca/community/publichealth/cdc/files/HarmReduction_PS.pdf

WRHA Industry Relations policy:
<http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/industryrelationship.php>

Reference Development of Practice Support Documents [Winnipeg Regional Health Authority \(wrha.mb.ca\)](http://www.wrha.mb.ca)

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APPENDICES: Appendix A

Examples for Population and Public Health – for Products Related to Healthy Parenting and Early Childhood Development

Examples follow directly from each consideration below:

1. Adhere to the WRHA Conflict of Interest policy (# 20.10.11) and the WRHA Industry Relations policy (# 10.00.110).
 - The Public Health program would decline any offer from a public health employee who has a family member affiliated with a product (ie: pacifiers) or service who wishes to donate that product to the PHN, team, or organization for free distribution to clients.

2. Comply with the Baby Friendly Initiative, and the World Health Organization (WHO) international code of marketing breast-milk substitutes. Examples:
 - A PHN completes an in-person breastfeeding assessment and may provide a nipple shield in situations where the infant is not latching and/or to establish and promote feedings at the breast.
 - A PHN does not access free supplies such as nipple shields or formula through personal relationships with representatives from private companies.

3. Encourage clients to build capacity and foster problem solving. This is especially important where product distribution cannot be sustained by the organization.
 - A PHN or FFHV can refer clients to community agencies to access layettes.
 - A FFHV may problem solve with a client to access coupons for items such as diapers or groceries.

4. Weigh the benefit against the potential harm to clients of providing the product. Safety and harm reduction are always primary considerations.
 - A PHN can provide head lice shampoo and education to a client after a thorough assessment of the situation. In-person is ideal, but may not always be possible.
 - Clients or families accessing public health for lice shampoo repeatedly may benefit from a CD consult or alternative interventions to assist in the management of head lice, rather than repeated chemical treatments.



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- FFHVs participate in a variety of Growing Great Kids (GGK) activities with families. Some activities involve making toys for the children to play with; others (e.g., tea box activity) are for the parents and not appropriate to be played with by children.
5. Attempt to ensure that products are equally available in all community areas if they available in one of them.
 - With head lice shampoo, the same products are available to all community areas on the list from Material Distribution Agency (MDA) but one community area may order Nix Shampoo while another community area prefers R & C Shampoo.
 6. Be consistent with the goals and direction of the WRHA, the program, as well as the needs and goals of the client in distributing products. Apply evidence-based decision-making to acquire and distribute products. Evidence-informed research is published in peer-reviewed journals, or it is available from reputable agencies/organizations.
 - If community area teams need access to products not on the approved list, there should be consultation with the Community Area Team Manager and/or the Clinical Nurse Specialist, so the item can be added.
 - At the client's request a PHN can provide condoms and discuss decreasing the risk of STI transmission as well as decreasing the risk of an unintended pregnancy with condom use. In consultation with the PHN, the FFHV may take condoms to families during scheduled home visits.
 - The delivery of a layette to a client's home is not encouraged as safety of products within the layette cannot be assured; there is potential to violate the principles of the Baby Friendly Initiative. As well as there is a missed opportunity to connect clients with supports or agencies within their community that may be helpful to clients in the future.
 7. Be given to clients with a statement of non-endorsement. Products are not distributed by WRHA Community employees for the purpose of endorsing a specific product.
 - The PHN may loan a Medela double electric breast pump to a client to assist and support their breastfeeding efforts, and this should include a statement of non-endorsement related to brand name of Medela.
 - The Families First Home Visitor may show a family a puzzle accessed through logistics, and can work with the family to make puzzles following examples provided

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in the GGK Curriculum. The puzzle from logistics is only an example; it is the activity of playing with the puzzle that promotes development, not the more expensive item or particular brand name.

8. Products for distribution should be purchased as the first choice.
 - Acquiring products that are listed in the approved list should be a first consideration.
 - FFHVs can order all supplies needed for GGK activities through logistics.
 - In the past Medela provided, free of charge, Purlan/Tender care nipple ointment samples along with the order of nipple shields. Both products can potentially assist in breastfeeding duration (short-term). In order to remain BFI compliant these sample must now be purchased. The WRHA has an existing contract with Medela so nipple ointment samples must be purchased through this company and not one of its competitors. It will be at the discretion of the individual community area offices to purchase nipple ointment samples if they choose to distribute them; must have approval from Team Manager. PHNs providing these products must do so after an assessment ensuring this is an appropriate intervention and must provide a statement of non-endorsement.

9. Consideration may be given to distributing products that build relationships with community partners.
 - PHNs may provide condoms to community partners on request
 - Toothbrushes are ordered from the approved list and can be given to families to support the GGK curriculum on dental health