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State supporting families during national infant formula shortage

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Health and the New Mexico Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD) are working closely to ensure that families are able to access infant formula during a national shortage.

“Some New Mexico families may be facing challenges locating infant formula, and we are working diligently to assist families in our Women, Infants, and Children program to make sure babies are getting the food they need,” said David R. Scrase, M.D. acting cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Department of the Health.

The national infant formula shortage has been an ongoing issue since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when formula was among the products stockpiled by consumers, and now the issue has been compounded by Food and Drug Administration recalls of several products.

The Department of Health Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is working to ensure its approximately 31,000 participants in New Mexico are getting the formula they need for their babies.

For program participants who purchase formula at stores, the program is working closely with all WIC-authorized vendors to help them locate formula.

The WIC program also directly orders and provides special formula as needed to participants who need them. Fortunately, the state WIC program’s main supplier is Gerber, which has maintained a steady supply of product.

However, the program does distribute some special formulas that are among the national brands recalled by the FDA. If a specific formula is out of stock with distributors, WIC staff reach out to individual participants and their doctor to discuss comparable formulas that can be issued in the meantime. WIC is in daily communication with its formula distributor to monitor the availability and status of specialty formulas that are ordered through them.

The state also provides families with access to formula through the Child and Adult Food Program, which uses U.S. Department of Agriculture funds to provide nutritious meals in home-based child care and child care centers. The ECECD Home Visiting program is also helping families locate the formula they need.

“ECECD continues to fund the purchase of high quality, nutritious infant formula for hundreds of child care homes and centers throughout the state,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “Although child care providers have not reported difficulty maintaining adequate supplies of formula for babies in their care, we are monitoring the situation closely to ensure that infants in child care throughout the state continue to receive the formula they need at no cost to their families.”

WIC participants who are having trouble finding formula should contact their local WIC office at <https://www.nmwic.org/locations/>. Additional information about the state WIC program can be found online at <https://www.nmwic.org/>. If you are experiencing formula shortages in your area, please report the details to nm.formula@state.nm.us.