

Good afternoon,

I hope that you and the families you serve are doing well in these challenging times. As the State Representative for the 1st Hampshire District, I wanted to make sure you had the latest information about the infant formula shortage and the state's response to this serious challenge that may be of interest to your community.

Suspected bacteria contamination in the Abbott formula company's products led the federal government to shut down an Abbott manufacturing plant in Michigan in February and to issue a large recall of Abbott formula from stores. Abbott had supplied almost one fifth of the nation's infant formula, and that shutdown - plus other supply chain issues worsened by the pandemic - has caused a nationwide shortage that continues to cause serious stress for parents who have had a hard time finding the formula that their young children rely on.

Despite recent federal actions, supplies may not return to normal levels until August. That makes this message hard but important: stockpiling should be avoided at all costs. It will make the supply chain issues worse as product is slowly returned to shelves and will make it harder for families to find what they need. Additionally, families should report any attempted price gouging as there have been some instances. Any price gouging can be reported [here](#).

For WIC families, the WIC program, run by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to help qualifying families access nutritional food and other services, is working with formula manufacturers and stores to keep track of formula supplies and is keeping local WIC providers updated. The Department also responded by working to expand the types of formula covered under WIC's food assistance program so that families can get the choices and flexibility they need when shopping with WIC cards at more than 800 grocery stores and pharmacies statewide. Specifically, there are now more brands (including Gerber and Mead Johnson) and more products/can sizes available to those using WIC benefits.

The state's Executive Office of Health and Human Services is asking families receiving WIC benefits who are having trouble finding formula to contact their local WIC office by calling the number on the back of their WIC card or by emailing [wicinfo.dph@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:wicinfo.dph@massmail.state.ma.us).

In addition, while formula given to babies for medical reasons normally takes a while to approve under MassHealth and the state's Division of Insurance, both agencies are now directing health plans to waive any prior authorization for 90 days to get rid of preventable delays in access.

Families may also chose to contact manufacturers' directly to see if they are able to help them locate products:

[MyGerber Baby Expert](#)

Abbott's Consumer Hotline: call 1-800-986-8540 and urgent product request line

Reckitt's (Mead Johnson) Customer Service line: call 1-800 BABY-123 (222-9123)

I hope this information is some form of help to the families you serve every day. Thank you for your work and your perseverance, and I look forward to the day - hopefully soon - when we can put this difficult shortage behind us. Please do not hesitate to reach out directly if we can offer any assistance at [Lindsay.Sabadosa@mahouse.gov](mailto:Lindsay.Sabadosa@mahouse.gov) or 413-270-1166 and please do forward this information on to anyone to whom it may be of interest.

In service,

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