

Request for Medical Formula and Supplemental Foods (RMF)

Release of Information Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Georgia WIC Program may not exchange confidential applicant and participant information with the applicant or participant's private health care provider without express authorization to do so by the applicant or participant. HIPAA does not cover the communications between WIC staff and medical providers regarding the care and nutritional needs of WIC participants. As a result, the Georgia WIC Request for Medical Formula and Supplemental Foods (RMF) has been updated to include a Release of Information (Section 5). The following FAQs consider potential barriers to the new requirement and provide guidance to resolve/circumvent the identified barriers.

1. What if the medical documentation received by the clinic is on an alternative form, or is on the old GA WIC Medical Documentation Form (MDF) that does not have the release of information?

Do not reject the old or alternative Medical Documentation form. Instead, have the participant complete the [DPH Release of Information](#) form and keep it on file in the medical record.

2. Is there a sample DPH Release of Information available so I know how to fill it out?

Yes. Sample [DPH Release of Information](#)

3. If the medical provider changes, is the authorization to release information transferred to the new provider?

No. The Release of Information is specific to the prescribing health care provider and/or medical practice at the time the RMF is signed. In the event of a change in medical providers and/or medical practice, the participant would have to provide a new authorization to release information to the new provider. Have the participant complete the [DPH Release of Information](#) form for the new provider and keep it on file in the medical record.

4. What if the participant refuses or declines to authorize the release of information?

Be sure that the participant understands the potential for delayed service should any information provided on the RMF require clarification or follow up with a medical provider. Without a valid RMF, the participant would be solely responsible for contacting the provider to receive the necessary clarifying information. The CPA would not be authorized to discuss the participant's formula needs with the medical provider on the participant's behalf. This includes conversations via conference call initiated by the participant. Verbal clarifications are not sufficient to authorize release, and new written medical documentation would have to be received from the medical provider prior to implementing any revisions to the RMF.

5. How do I document changes in authorization for release? What if the participant changes their mind?

If the participant no longer wants to authorize the release of his or her information document, in large writing, "VOID" over and across the participant/parent/caregiver printed name and signature. Next, have the participant/parent/caregiver document their initials and the date in any "white space" in or around Section 5.

6. How long is the Release of Information valid?

The RMF Release of Information is valid through the length of use indicated on the medical documentation or when the medical documentation expires, as long as the provider doesn't change. For example, medical documentation sent directly to the clinic for a participant food package change does not require a new release of information to communicate with the provider if the original medical documentation is still valid and included an authorization for release.

The [DPH Authorization for Release](#) is valid up to the date documented on the form or up to one year.

7. What if a new RMF is received directly from the provider and needs clarification, however there is no consent for release on file?

The CPA would need to attempt to contact the participant regarding the clarification needs and have them communicate this to their provider. If the CPA is unable to contact the participant, the medical documentation can only be clarified once the participant has signed a Release of Information.

8. What is the procedure for when a participant comes into the clinic without any medical documentation and they are due for recertification? How do we get in touch with the provider to let them know a new RMF is needed?

If the participant already has a Release of Information on file from a previous certification that has not yet expired, the CPA may contact the provider. If the participant is in the clinic, have the participant complete the [DPH Release of Information](#) form for the new provider and keep it on file in the medical record.

9. What is the procedure for obtaining a release of information when conducting client services by telephone or virtually?

The local agency is able to accept electronic submissions of a signed release of information, directly from the participant, via a secure communications medium authorized for use in their districts. If the participant has the hard copy of the RMF from their medical provider, they may complete the release of information and send a photo copy or image of the RMF by secure fax or e-mail to the clinic. If the participant does not have the RMF on hand, they may print the [DPH Release of Information](#) from the Georgia WIC webpage.