

Prescription for Health

2016 Outcome Report



Prescription for Health was generously funded by Saint Joseph Mercy Health System in 2016 with additional financial support from multiple partners. Washtenaw County Public Health coordinates the program. Prescription for Health connects the **medical system** and the **food sector** by creating a relationship between clinic staff, their patients, and local farmers markets. Health care providers write “prescriptions” for their patients to eat more fruits and vegetables. These prescriptions can be “filled” at local farmers markets, where participants work with a Community Health Worker to set health goals.

Participants received up to **\$100** in tokens to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets, as well as nutrition education and support.

During 2016, **336** patients from 12 different health clinics and agencies serving low-income individuals participated. A total of **\$21,385** was spent on fruits and vegetables at the markets, improving participants’ access to healthy foods and supporting the local food system.

Special thanks to our partners:

Aid in Milan, Faith in Action, Hope Clinic, IHA Milan Medical Center, Packard Health, Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools, St. Joseph Mercy Academic Internal Medicine Clinic, St. Joseph Mercy Academic OB/Gyn Center, St. Joseph Mercy Neighborhood Family Health Center, UNIFIED – HIV Health and Beyond, University of Michigan Chelsea Health Center, Washtenaw County Public Health Tuberculosis program, Chelsea Farmers Markets, Growing Hope’s Ypsilanti Farmers Markets, Milan Farmers & Artisans Market, Pittsfield Township Farmers Market, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market, & Food Gatherers.

“I am proud to be on a program that cares about me getting healthier.”

-Program Participant 2016

Key Findings:

- Participant consumption of fruits and vegetables **increased by over a half cup per day** from pre- to post-program (n=187; mean=0.56; p<.001)
- Participants reported a **decrease in consumption of unhealthy foods** (i.e. chips, sweets, soda, or fast food) with the average changing from “3-4 times per day” pre-program to “1-2 times per day” post-program (n=189; p<.001)
- 88% of participants reported that the program **helped them manage a health condition** (n=180)
- 92% of participants (n=188) reported **knowing that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits could be used** at the farmers market post-program, compared with only 64% pre-program (n=334)
- 97% of participants surveyed said that the **Community Health Workers supported them** in eating healthier (n=36)

Demographics:

- 72% female
- 35% African American/black, 52% Caucasian/white, 2% Latino/Hispanic, 1% Asian American/Asian, 1% Native American/American Indian and 9% identified as two or more races or other
- Average age: 47 years; age range: 2 years – 90 years
- 43% reported having at least one child living in their household
- 55% reported that they had previously participated in the Prescription for Health program

High Risk for Food Insecurity:

- 57% had a yearly income of less than \$15,000
- 73% reported that they or others in their home had cut the size of meals, skipped meals, and/or bought fewer healthy foods within the past year because of a lack of money for food
- 53% reported using SNAP benefits

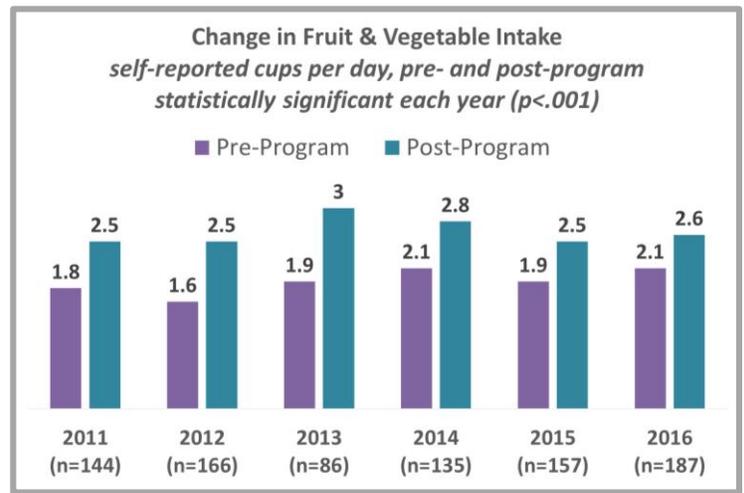
How the Program Worked:

Clinic staff referred patients to the program based on food access difficulties, chronic disease risk, and interest. To enroll, patients attended a group enrollment session where they engaged in a discussion about the link between health, chronic disease, and food choices; set specific goals for healthy eating; and received a "prescription" for fruits and vegetables. Patients "filled" their prescriptions at participating local farmers markets.

When participants came to the Prescription for Health (PFH) table at the farmers markets, Community Health Workers (CHWs) reviewed the participants' goals and assisted them in setting a weekly goal. After the educational support, the patient received \$10 in tokens to spend on produce at the farmers market. Up to \$100, or up to ten visits, was allocated for each participant.

PFH extended through December via the indoor winter farmers markets in Ypsilanti and Chelsea and a monthly fresh food box distribution in November and December (\$20 worth of produce per box) in Milan.

Since 2013, CHWs have been formally integrated into the program to provide more peer social support, decrease barriers, and reduce costs. They assisted with enrollment and goal setting; called patients to offer support and reminders; provided referrals to other healthy eating resources, such as SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks; and administered post-program surveys.



Post-Program Survey Results:

Post-program survey results were obtained from 60% of program enrollees. Almost all of those enrolled visited the market at least once (92%), and 68% used seven or more of their allotted visits. The percentage of participants who used all ten of their visits increased by 3% compared to last year's program. The most common barrier reported to token redemption was a health problem or health problems.

Expansion:

PFH created several new partnerships in 2016. By expanding to Milan (Aid in Milan, IHA Milan Medical Center, and Milan Farmers & Artisans Market), PFH was extended to 25 previously unreached individuals (7% of overall enrollees). Additionally, PFH created several new partnerships with other referring agencies, as well as with Pittsfield Township Farmers Market, where participants could spend (but not receive) PFH tokens.

Prescription for Health Economic Impact:

Participants spent a total of \$14,172 in PFH tokens at Growing Hope's Ypsilanti Farmers Markets (29.6% of all food access program dollars spent and 5.5% of total sales May-December), \$5,401 at the Chelsea Farmers Markets (48% of all food access program dollars spent and 3% of total sales May-December), \$926 at the Milan Farmers & Artisans Market, \$557 at the St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market (100% of all food access program dollars spent and 2% of annual sales), and \$329 at the Pittsfield Township Farmers Market. Additionally, PFH provided \$1,000 worth of produce through fresh food boxes.

