

Prescription for Health

2015 Outcome Report



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**PRESCRIPTION
for HEALTH**

Coordinated by Washtenaw County Public Health and funded by The Kresge Foundation with additional financial support from St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, 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.

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 2015, **285** patients from eight different health clinics serving low-income individuals participated. A total of **\$17,617** 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:

Faith in Action, Hope Clinic, Packard Health, Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools, St. Joseph Mercy Academic Internal Medicine Clinic, St. Joseph Mercy Neighborhood Family Health Center, University of Michigan Chelsea Health Center, Washtenaw County Public Health Tuberculosis program, Chelsea and Bushel Basket Farmers Markets, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market, Ypsilanti Depot Town and Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Markets (run by Growing Hope), & Food Gatherers.

“[Going to the farmers market is] a treat, not a treatment.”

-Program Participant 2015

Key Findings for All Participants:

- Participant consumption of fruits and vegetables **increased by nearly one cup per day** from pre- to post-program (n=157; mean=0.6; p<.001)
- Participants showed an **increase in self-reported health**, with the average changing from “fair” pre-program to “good” post-program (n=158; p<.001)
- 89% reported that the program **helped them manage a health condition**
- **88%** of participants reported knowing that Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits could be used at the farmers market post-program, compared with only **61%** pre-program
- **94%** of participants reported that the Community Health Workers supported them in eating healthier and achieving their goals (n=36)

Participant Demographics:

- 76% female
- 41% African American/black, 45% Caucasian/white, 3% Latino/Hispanic, 2% Asian American/Asian, 1% Native American/American Indian and 8% identified as two or more races or other
- Average age: 48 years; age range: 1 year – 89 years
- 43% reported having at least one child living in their household
- 45% reported that they had previously participated in the Prescription for Health program

Participants Were at High Risk for Food Insecurity:

- 59% had a yearly income of less than \$15,000
- 74% 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
- 59% reported using SNAP benefits

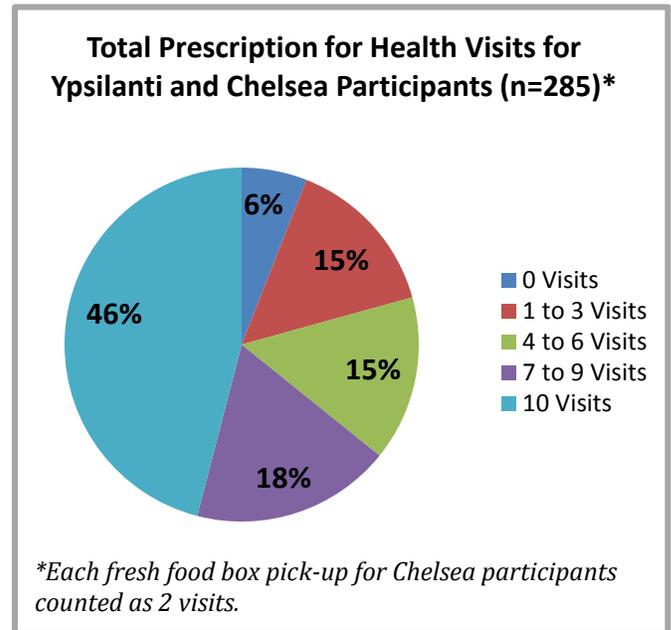
How the Program Worked:

Clinic staff identified patients for the program based on food access difficulties, chronic disease risk, and interest and scheduled referred patients for a group enrollment session. At the enrollment session, enrollees 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, peer-support program staff called 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 market in Ypsilanti and a monthly fresh food box distribution in November and December (\$20 worth of produce per box) in Chelsea.

Since 2013, CHWs have been formally integrated into the program to provide more 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 participants. Almost all enrolled patients visited the market at least once (94%), and 64% of participants used seven or more of their allotted visits. The percentage of participants who used all ten of their visits increased by 15% compared to last year's program. The most common barrier to token redemption was a scheduling conflict with the farmers markets' hours or days of operation.

Prescription for Health Economic Impact:

Participants spent a total of \$13,768 in PFH tokens at the Ypsilanti Farmers Markets, \$3,258 at the Chelsea Farmers Markets (52% of all food access program dollars spent), and \$591 at the St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market. Additionally, PFH provided \$2,600 worth of produce through fresh food boxes.

Program Implementation Guide:

Washtenaw County Public Health created a guide to help other organizations replicate this evidence-based model in their communities.

To access this guide, please visit:

www.ewashtenaw.org/prescriptionforhealth

