



Prescription for Health Programs in Michigan

An Overview and Summary of Best Practices



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Introduction

This publication provides an overview of the Prescription for Health style programs currently or previously operating in Michigan. It was developed by the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), including contributions by Dr. Dru Montri, Executive Director; Christine Easley, Certified Market Manager; Sydney Debien, Food Access Coordinator; Rebecca Peña, Student Assistant; Emily Syrja, Office Administrator; and Emily Beutel, Design and Branding Specialist. This project was funded through the CDC State and Local Public Health Actions to Prevent Obesity, Diabetes, and Heart Disease and Stroke 1422.

The MIFMA team completed a survey of all known Prescription for Health style programs in Michigan to highlight each program as a case study and then to summarize best practices. Prescription for Health style programs support healthy behavior change for individuals and families through partnerships with healthcare and other providers who focus on supporting healthy eating (farmers and farmers markets) and/or community partners who provide opportunities for increased physical activity. Programs are commonly aimed at improving health outcomes for low-income patients with diet-related diseases. Not all Michigan programs are referred to as Prescription for Health, as you will see by the different program names throughout this publication. The survey included questions about program longevity, motivation for starting and maintaining the program, funding, partnerships, process, promotion, and evaluation.

This overview of programs is meant to complement the Prescription for Health Program Implementation Guide developed by Washtenaw County Public Health, released in March 2016. Their Implementation Guide provides detailed instruction on planning, implementation and evaluation and is highly recommended for local public health departments and community partners who are interested in starting a Prescription for Health program in their communities. This guide shows the ways in which other Michigan communities have adapted Prescription for Health style programming to meet their needs and to reinforce lessons learned throughout the state.

MIFMA would like to thank all of the healthcare providers, farmers market managers, farmers, families and individuals who shared their programs and stories. This overview of the great work happening across the state would not have been possible without all of their contributions.



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Overview of Programs

Project Lead	Washtenaw County Public Health	Ecology Center	District Health Department 10, Baldwin Family Health Care, and West Michigan Community Mental Health	Kent County Health Department
Program Name	Prescription for Health	Fresh Prescription	Prescription for Health	Rx for Healthier Living
Year Started	2008	2013	2015	2015
Location	Washtenaw County	Detroit	Lake County	Grand Rapids
Who is Eligible?	Individuals who have healthy food access barriers, chronic disease risk and interest in shopping at farmers markets	Patients with chronic disease, caregivers of children ages 0 through 5, pregnant women, and those who are food insecure	Patients with healthy food access barriers, chronic disease risk and an interest/ability to shop at the Circle R Farms Individuals eligible for SNAP were not eligible for this program	Adult patients at Clinica Santa Maria Clinic and Browning Claytor Health Center (vulnerable populations within the Hope Zones of Grand Rapids)
What is the Prescription for?	Fruits and vegetables	Fruits and vegetables	Fruits and vegetables, food-producing plants	Non-clinical interventions such as physical activity, healthy eating (fruits & vegetables) and water consumption
Value	\$10 per visit up to 10 visits, or \$100 total	\$40 per participant put on a debit type card, or a Fresh Food Share	\$10 voucher per week, up \$80 per season and a \$10 bonus at the end of the program for program completion	No monetary value
Funder	St Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital and Kresge Foundation	Grants and donations, relies on SNAP-Ed funding for nutrition education	Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)	MDHHS

Spectrum Health	Lenawee Health Network	Bay Mills Health Center	Munson Medical Center	Hurley Children's Center
Food Rx	Prescription for Health	Diabetes Coupons	Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program	Nutrition Prescription Program
2015	2015	2016	2016	2016
Grand Rapids	Adrian	Bay Mills Indian Community	Traverse City	Flint
Low-income (below 200 percent of the poverty level) clients enrolled in one of the Spectrum Health Healthier Communities programs but not enrolled in any other similar benefits program provided by other community organizations	Patients who have prediabetes, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and/or are overweight	Bay Mills members participating in diabetes education	Patients with chronic disease	Any child over the age of 6 months seen at Hurley Children's Center for a well or sick visit
Fruits and vegetables	Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables	Local produce, eggs, fish, maple syrup and honey	Fruits, vegetables, and food-producing plants	Fruits and vegetables
\$20 each week for 20 weeks	\$6 per visit up to 7 visits, or \$42 total	\$30 booklet of \$2 coupons	\$25 earned per class attended, up to \$100 total	\$10
Spectrum Health's Healthier Communities program	MDHHS	Indian Health Service funding	MDHHS	MDHHS and The Rite Aid Foundation

Prescription for Health, coordinated by Washtenaw County Public Health

Program Started: 2008



The Washtenaw County Public Health Prescription for Health program was started as a result of a county health survey that showed disparities in access to the intake of fruits and vegetables. This was the first Prescription for Health program in Michigan and has been the inspiration for many of the other programs included in this publication. In March 2016, they released a Program Implementation Guide “to assist local public health departments and their community partners (clinics, farmers markets, and funders) in using an evidence-based model to implement a fruit and vegetable prescription program in their community.” This guide, and many other valuable resources, can be found at www.ewashtenaw.org/prescriptionforhealth.

Since the program was first piloted in 2008, many different health clinics and farmers markets have been partners in the Prescription for Health program. All of the partners share the goal of reaching those who are low-income and food-insecure and increasing consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among the participants.

Prescription for Health is currently funded through Saint Joseph Mercy Health System and multiple partners, with prior support from The Kresge Foundation.

How It Works

Health care providers write “prescriptions” for their patients to eat more fruits and vegetables. Patients are eligible if they have healthy food access barriers, chronic disease risk, and are interested in shopping at farmers markets.

Patients are referred to the program when their clinician fills out the referral

2016 Clinic Partners:

- St. Joseph Mercy Neighborhood Family Health Center (*joined 2008*)
- St. Joseph Mercy Academic Internal Medicine Clinic (*joined 2015*)
- St. Joseph Mercy Academic OB/Gyn Center (*joined 2016*)
- Packard Health (*joined 2009*)
- Hope Clinic (*joined 2008*)
- UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond (*joined 2016*)
- Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) (*joined 2014*)
- Washtenaw County Public Health Tuberculosis Program (*joined 2015*)
- Faith in Action (*joined 2012*)
- U of M Chelsea Health Center (*joined 2012*)
- Aid in Milan (*joined 2016*)
- IHA Milan Medical Center (*joined 2016*)

2016 Farmers Market Partners:

- Growing Hope’s Ypsilanti Farmers Markets (distribute and accept program tokens) (*joined 2008*)
- Chelsea Farmers Markets (distribute and accept Prescription for Health tokens) (*joined 2012*)
- St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Farmers Market (distributes and accepts program tokens) (*joined 2015*)
- Pittsfield Township Farmers Market (does not distribute program tokens but accepts them) (*joined 2016*)
- Growing Hope’s YpsiPlanti Garden Supply and Ypsilanti Mobile Farm Stand (do not distribute program tokens but accept them) (*joined 2016 and 2015, respectively*)
- Milan Farmers & Artisans Market (distributes and accepts program tokens) (*joined 2016*)



form, gives it to the Prescription for Health staff, and schedules the patient for a group enrollment session. Clinic staff host and participate in the group enrollment sessions. Patients receive their prescription cards after they attend a group enrollment session and complete a pre-program survey and consent form.

Participants bring their prescription cards to the Prescription for Health table at the farmers market where they receive tokens, each worth \$1, to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition to receiving the incentive, patients also receive nutrition education and support from community health workers. Participants receive 10 tokens per farmers market visit for a total of \$10 each visit. Each participant is able to visit the farmers market up to 10 times throughout the season for a total program benefit of \$100 per participant. This program runs June through December. As the farmers market in Milan does not operate in November and December, participants in Milan are allotted six farmers market visits during the season and pick up a monthly fresh food box in November and December. Each box contains \$20 worth of fresh produce and, therefore, counts as two farmers market visits.

The farmers markets invoice Washtenaw County Public Health for all tokens redeemed at their markets so they are able to reimburse farmers on a monthly basis.



Evaluation

Washtenaw County Public Health staff conduct pre- and post-program surveys of patients. They also track patients' visits to the farmers markets throughout the season. The goal is to encourage participants to fully utilize this program. They also monitor intake of fruits and vegetables, self-reported health outcomes, participants' abilities to manage their health condition(s), and the level of support that the community health workers provide to patients to help patients eat healthier and reach their personal goals. In addition, staff promote and track the awareness of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) or Bridge Cards, at the farmers markets.

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“The feedback we have gotten from our participants here at Faith in Action has been overwhelmingly positive. They enjoy the markets, the atmosphere, the beauty of the food, and the possibilities of good food on the table. One person reported, ‘I feel so powerful walking out of there with bags of vegetables in each hand.’ Another participant was reporting on how much weight he had lost and promptly lifted his shirt to show the gap in the waist of his now baggy pants. ‘I’ve really changed the way I’ve been eating and have lost weight for the first time ever.’ He was very proud. There has been an increase in the number of conversations we have at the pantry as people discuss the ways they have been cooking their new foods and asking for ideas on even more recipes. This is a rich and fun exchange that is satisfying for everyone. We see the Prescription for Health model as a way for people to make real and lasting changes in the composition of their daily diets.” *

- Nancy Paul, Faith in Action Director

* Washtenaw County Public Health, Program Implementation Guide, March 2016, available for access at www.ewashtenaw.org/prescriptionforhealth

Fresh Prescription in Detroit, coordinated by the Ecology Center

Program Started: 2013



Fresh Prescription is modeled after Washtenaw County Public Health's Prescription for Health program. The program is seen as an approach to building a healthier food system that connects low-income patients to fresh, locally-grown produce while benefiting Michigan farmers. The first fruit and vegetable prescription program in Detroit, it was launched in July 2013 at Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS), Inc., in partnership with Eastern Market Farm Stand and Fair Food Network.

In 2014, American Indian Health and Family Services (AIHFS) with Gleaner's Fresh Food Share box joined the program, as well as Joy-Southfield Community Development Corporation (CDC) and its Sowing Seeds Growing Futures Farmers Market in partnership with Henry Ford Health System/Henry Ford Health System Generation with Promise and the Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative. Since then, more partners have joined, including Covenant Community Care, Mercy Primary Care Center, Peaches and Greens Produce Market and GenesisHOPE CDC. Detroit Food Policy Council has also joined in recent years as a supporter.

Fresh Prescription's network of partners includes health centers, local food retailers (farmers markets, farmers, mobile markets, etc.) and community partners. It is funded through grants and donations and relies on SNAP-Ed funding for nutrition education.

How It Works

The Fresh Prescription program works in multiple models among Detroit partners. In one instance, a farmers market operates on-site at CHASS with a community health worker doing group enrollment into the program. In another case with Henry Ford Health System, a case worker or nutritionist manages the program and does ongoing referrals for healthy living using a farm stand at their site. At AIHFS, participants receive a Fresh Food Share box and are invited to take part in ongoing nutritional education and support programming. Fresh Prescription has also added other options through the Peaches and Greens mobile market, store and home delivery option, all of which are combined with support and education services over the phone.

In all models, a referral screening tool and eligibility checklist form are used by health care providers to determine eligibility for the program. All participants are low-income patients with chronic disease, caregivers of children ages 0 through 5, pregnant women, and those who are food insecure. The health care providers writing prescriptions differ depending on the facility but include clinicians and nutritionists. The prescription itself differs by partner, but it generally prescribes eating more locally grown fruits and vegetables, setting goals for healthy eating, and receiving some type of nutritional education and support. Each participant is given \$40 on a debit style card to be spent \$10 at a time. The only program in which this differs is the Fresh Food Share box option, in which participants receive four boxes with a total value of greater than \$40.



After a patient has been deemed eligible, there are two different options for orientation. Patients who are part of the CHASS program will be invited to a group orientation in which they discuss what to expect at the farmers market, how to set appropriate health goals, and take part in a pre-program survey. In all the other instances, participants are oriented to the Fresh Prescription program individually, meeting with a health care provider one-on-one to discuss their health goals, take the pre-program survey, and collect biometric data such as height, weight and body mass index (BMI) score.

Patients, in most cases, “fill” their prescription at a partnering farm stand or market, where they also receive nutrition counseling, see cooking demonstrations, and receive other educational support for making meaningful, healthy eating changes. In the case of the AIHFS program, the participants receive a box of fresh fruits and vegetables along with their nutrition education and other support. Another, new option allows the patient to have their Peaches and Greens produce delivered right to their home, and the support and education take place via phone calls.

Vendors participating in the program are reimbursed biweekly, monthly or seasonally, depending on what was negotiated with the partner organizations.

Evaluation

The program evaluates through the pre- and post- program surveys, and information is collected during participant focus groups. Key informants, such as program coordinators, health care staff, and food system staff, are interviewed. Redemption data from the utilization of the prescription card is evaluated. Biometric data on participants, such as A1C levels, BMI, height and weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, is compared and evaluated. Market vendors are also surveyed.

Success is defined by participants achieving positive health outcomes – changing shopping, cooking and meal preparation behaviors, increasing healthy eating, and increasing knowledge, skills, and support for healthy eating. A summary of program outcomes is available at <http://www.ecocenter.org/fresh-prescription>.

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“ This program had a powerful impact in our neighborhood and is great for our local farmers. The produce vendors’ sales more than doubled from the previous year and the produce was delicious.
- Trisha Hopkins, Joy-Southfield CDC
Director of Youth & Family Development
(taken from 2014 Outcomes report) ”



Prescription for Health in Lake County, coordinated by District Health Department (DHD) 10, Baldwin Family Health Care, and West Michigan Community Mental Health

Program Dates: May – September 2015

The program started when the DHD found patients had limited access to fruits and vegetables and therefore low levels of produce consumption. Lake County had received a low health rating for health behaviors and developed the program to assist patients who had barriers and needed support in setting and achieving goals for behavior change.

The partners for this Prescription for Health program included Baldwin Family Health Care, West Michigan Community Mental Health, and Circle R Farms. Baldwin Family Health Care was the main referring agency for the program and committed to providing healthy opportunities for their patients. West Michigan Community Mental Health made some referrals as well, as they were also looking for healthy options for their clients. Circle R Farms, who operates a local farm stand and is committed to creating a healthier community by providing produce, participated as the source for fruits and vegetables. The farm owner also chairs the local food policy council in Lake County.

The program was funded through MDHHS's MI Healthy Communities Grant.

How it Worked



Potential participants were identified by the clinic who had or were at risk for chronic diseases. These participants faced barriers to accessing nutritious food but were interested in and an able to shop at Circle R Farms. In this program, individuals who were eligible for SNAP were not eligible for Prescription for Health.

If a patient met the eligibility requirements, his or her clinician would fill out a referral form and send it to the DHD 10 office. DHD 10 would then confirm eligibility and schedule the patient for a group enrollment session, hosted every other week for 16 weeks. At the enrollment session, DHD 10 staff would explain the program before patients took a pre-program survey, received their prescription card for fruits and vegetables or food-producing plants, set health goals, and signed the consent forms.

After enrollment, prescriptions were filled with fruits and vegetables at Circle R Farms. DHD 10 staff had an educator table at the farm stand where they were available to review patient goals and provide one-on-one support. The patients would stop at the educator table for consultation and would receive \$10 in vouchers for fruits and vegetables. Patients were eligible to receive \$10 in vouchers per week, up to \$80 per season, with a \$10 bonus at the end of the program for program completion.

Circle R Farms then invoiced DHD 10 for redeemed vouchers.

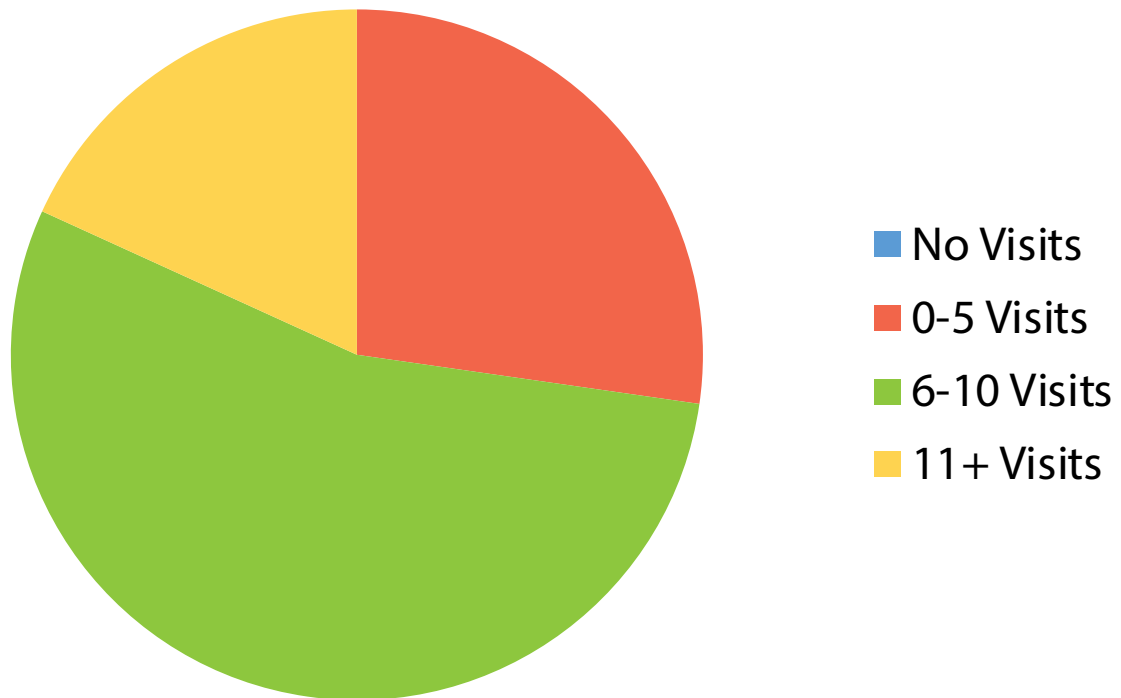
Evaluation

The program was evaluated through the pre- and post- program surveys. Surveys indicated an increase in the consumption of fruits and vegetables and also an increase in self-rated health scores. Even though DHD 10 was able to demonstrate positive outcomes, the program is no longer active in Lake County due to a lack of funding.

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Participant Visits to Circle R Farms



Rx for Healthier Living, coordinated by Kent County Health Department and Grand Rapids YMCA

Program Started: 2015



Kent County Health Department (KCHD), through the Obesity Initiative, has been working with two initiatives in Kent County that aim to reduce obesity and chronic conditions and engage vulnerable populations with non-clinical interventions (physical activity and healthy eating) in Grand Rapids Hope Zones. First, the KCHD was awarded a federal grant, Racial Ethnic Approaches to Community Health – REACH. The second, the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids was awarded a MDHHS MI 1422 Grant – Implementing Public Health Prevention Strategies for Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke through Chronic Disease Coordinating Networks. To utilize healthy eating and active living approaches, the Rx for Healthier Living program was created.

With partners Clinica Santa Maria and Browning Claytor Health Center (of Mercy Health St. Mary's), providers utilize the Rx for Healthier Living scripts to help their patients achieve lifestyle changes with the ultimate goal of reducing or helping to better control chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. Clinic and Rx for Healthier Living staff are working together to customize health education materials to be easily read in English or Spanish and to implement the program with their patients, provide statistics on the program, and identify barriers or challenges.

How it Works

The Rx for Healthier Living program is different from most fruit and vegetable prescription programs as it does not include vouchers for food. Health care providers prescribe clients (adult patients at the participating clinics) recommendations for including physical activity and fresh healthy food into their lives. This includes prescribing aerobic, stretching, and flexibility activities, increasing their patients intake of fruits, vegetables, and adequate water consumption daily. Providing community resources such as walking routes, and community exercise classes, and other referrals to programs like Diabetes Prevention, and smoke cessation. Prescriptions are also accompanied with a Healthier Living Journal (available in both English and Spanish). Providers discuss goals and instruct patients on how to use the journal to record their activities. Journals make tracking their efforts for lifestyle changes easier and can be used to evaluate their progress at the next visit.

Evaluation

Health care providers evaluate the patients' progress and help them to reevaluate their goals. Evaluation efforts include: (1) identifying the number of patients in each clinic who have chronic disease risk factors (overweight/obesity, tobacco use, hypertension, etc.); (2) identifying the number of patients who receive prescriptions for health/activity logs; (3) identifying the number of patients who receive referrals to community-based prevention programs (Diabetes Prevention Program, smoking cessation, etc.); and (4) identifying the number of patients who follow through with referrals and the health behaviors identified in the prescriptions for health.

Contact

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Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program, coordinated by Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids

Program Started: 2015

The Spectrum Health Food and Vegetable Prescription program was started for three main reasons: (1) to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetable intake to the recommended five servings per day; (2) to increase the use of SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks at area farmers markets and by YMCA Veggie Van clients; and (3) to conduct research to determine the potential behavior change and health impact of a Spectrum Health Food and Vegetable Prescription program.

To accomplish these goals, the Spectrum Health Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program team partnered with the YMCA Veggie Van and Fulton Street Farmers Market in 2015. These partners served as locations where prescriptions could be filled.

The Spectrum Health Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program is funded by the Spectrum Health Healthier Communities Department.

How it Works

To qualify for the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program, an individual must first be enrolled in one of the other Spectrum Health Healthier Communities programs (Core Health, MOMs or Programa Puente) and must not be already enrolled in any other similar benefits program provided by other community organizations. Participants must also have an income below 200 percent of the poverty level.

Eligible clients are referred to the program through a referral from their physician. The patient is then enrolled by a community health worker who provides health education and given vouchers to be redeemed at either the Fulton Street Farmers Market or YMCA's Veggie Van. The vouchers (\$20 each week for up to 20 weeks) can be spent on fruits and vegetables. In this program, voucher usage is tracked electronically through QR codes on the back of each \$1 voucher.



Rebecca Stauffer has found real benefit in shopping at the Fulton Street Farmers Market with help from Spectrum Health's food prescription program. (photo credit Chris Clark, Spectrum Health Beat)

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription program takes many forms, including a pre- and post-program survey that asks clients about their knowledge of fruit and vegetable dietary recommendations, fruit and vegetable consumption, awareness and use of food assistance programs, access to farmers markets, and their food security. The post-program survey specifically asks if the program led to behavioral change in diet or shopping habits. Health measurements are taken for evaluation as well.

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Prescription for Health, coordinated by Healthy Lenawee and Lenawee Health Network

Program Started: 2015



The Prescription for Health program was started to help people with a high risk of developing a diet-related disease to eat more fruits and vegetables. By providing patients with “prescriptions” for fresh fruits and vegetables to be redeemed at the Adrian Farmers Market, the program also aimed to strengthen the connections between health care providers and local food producers. It was modeled after the Washtenaw County Health Department Prescription for Health program.

Partners include the Lenawee Health Network, which is a network of more than 30 agencies and organizations, and the Adrian Farmers Market. Funding was provided by MDHHS.

How it Works

Patients who have prediabetes, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and/or are overweight are eligible to join the program. Patients can be referred to the program at the Family Medical Center, the Adrian Family Pharmacy, or through the YMCA of Lenawee County’s Diabetes Prevention Program. Once patients have been referred to the program, they receive a prescription and an informational postcard with instructions to go to the welcome station at the Adrian Farmers Market to pick up their Prescription for Health tokens. During their first visit, patients complete a consent form and pre-program survey before receiving their tokens.

In 2015, patients were eligible to receive 10 tokens, each worth \$1, for a total of \$10 per visit for up to 10 market visits. In 2016, the amount was reduced to six tokens each visit for up to seven visits for a total of \$42 in an effort to increase the reach to 100 participants with the funding available. Tokens can only be used to buy Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables.

Market vendors who sell Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables are eligible to accept tokens. Vendors turn in the tokens they collect to the market treasurer so they can be reimbursed by the market.



Evaluation

When the program started in 2015, the aim was to include evaluation tools that would help the Adrian Farmers Market understand their trends and impacts and to help understand the impact of the Prescription for Health program on the patients, clinic staff, market vendors and the farmers market overall. An evaluation plan and data collection tools were designed by Growing Hope in Ypsilanti.

The Adrian Farmers Market began using a daily market tracking sheet, recorded customer and vendor counts, recorded vendor sales, and implemented a Rapid Market Assessment (one day market snapshot). They also conduct pre- and post-program surveys to measure self-reported impact of the Prescription for Health program. Results of the evaluation are shared with program partners and used to identify opportunities for future program improvements.



MIFMA conducts Rapid Market Assessments at a discounted rate for its member markets, like the Adrian Farmers Market. Learn more at www.mifma.org/rapid-market-assessment-reports

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Diabetes Coupons, coordinated by Bay Mills Health Center

Program Started: 2016

This program was started after dieticians learned the main reasons patients indicated they do not eat fresh, local food is due to cost and availability. Partners include the Bay Mills Health Center and the Brimley/Bay Mills Farmer's Market.

The program is funded through the Special Diabetes Program (Indian Health Service funding). This funding has been continuous for many years and is expected to remain in place for years to come. The farmers market is funded through a CDC grant: REACH and Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country. This funding is more difficult to sustain, so partners continue to seek ways to fund the staff who lead these types of special programs and projects.

How it Works

Bay Mills members participating in diabetes education are eligible to receive one \$30 booklet of coupons. Diabetes education and this program are marketed through the Bay Mills Diabetes Program, the Bay Mills News (a monthly tribal paper), their website, social media, and waiting room monitors at Bay Mills Health Center. After members complete a diabetes educational session, a registered dietician distributes a coupon booklet with coupons in \$2 increments (modeled after WIC Project FRESH and Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH). Coupons can be used to purchase local produce, eggs, fish, maple syrup and honey.

The Brimey/Bay Mills Farmer's Market executes agreements with all farmers market vendors. Vendors are oriented to the program at the beginning market vendor meeting and as needed throughout the market season. Vendors accepting coupons can return them to the market manager when they reach a \$20 minimum and are reimbursed by the Bay Mills Indian Community within one week.



Evaluation

Records are kept that identify the amount of coupons collected by each vendor. Plans are in place to survey both patients and vendors at the end of the season.

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Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program, coordinated by Munson Medical Center in Traverse City

Program Started: 2016



As a nonprofit hospital, Munson Medical Center (MMC) conducts a community health assessment every three years. In 2013, they identified obesity as an issue and created Shape Up North as a result. They have four focus areas: schools, businesses, health providers, and the community at-large. The new Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program is coordinated by Shape Up North in response to the obesity issue and is modeled after the Washtenaw County Public Health Prescription for Health program.

Partners include Munson Family Practice, Shape Up North, Michigan State University Extension (MSUE), the Village at Grand Traverse Farmers Market, local health departments, care providers and school districts. The project is funded by MDHHS.

How it Works

Individuals with a chronic disease are referred to the program by their healthcare provider. A MMC Community Health Coordinator then receives the patient's contact information and reaches out to them to confirm and complete enrollment, including a pre-program survey. Prescriptions for fruits, vegetables and food-producing plants can be filled at the farmers market. Participants can receive \$25 per nutrition class and have the opportunity to earn a total of \$100. Nutrition classes, often featuring cooking demonstrations, are held on Mondays during market days. Participants must attend the classes to receive their five \$5 coupons for a total of \$25, up to \$100 total. Each coupon has a participant and vendor ID. Farmers market vendors are reimbursed monthly by MMC.



Evaluation

Michigan State University has assisted by developing pre- and post-program surveys. They are interested in evaluating increased confidence in consumption of fruits and vegetables.

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Nutrition Prescription Program, coordinated by Hurley Children's Center in Flint

Program Started: 2016



The Nutrition Prescription Program is part of the Healthy Active Living program that includes many components, like clinical dietitians, nutrition education and promotion, and Double Up Food Bucks promotion. The Nutrition Prescription Program was developed to increase intake of fruits and vegetables. Hurley Children's Center – Sumathi Mukkamala Children's Center (the Center) is located in the same building as the Flint Farmers' Market, so the partnership between the organizations was especially convenient.

The Hurley Foundation received a grant for fruit and vegetable prescriptions from The Rite Aid Foundation. Hurley also received program funding for "Take One Apple Twice a Day" from an MDHHS 2016 Health Innovation grant.

How It Works



Any child over the age of six months who is visiting the Center is eligible to participate. At every well child and sick call visit, children are given a prescription order that can be redeemed with a Flint Farmers' Market vendor for \$10 in fruits and vegetables. The farmers market is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. If the prescription is given on a day when the farmers market is not open (Monday, Wednesday or Friday), patients are given a pre-filled bag of fruits and vegetables worth \$10 sourced from the farmers market. Additionally, patients aged 18 months to 13 years receive a MyPlate. A Center registered dietitian is available to meet with families, orient them to the farmers market, and provide nutrition education.

After filling a prescription, farmers market vendors turn in the prescriptions to market management for reimbursement. The Center then reimburses the Flint Farmers' Market.

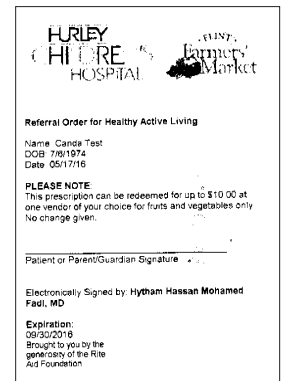
Evaluation

The Center built fruit and vegetable consumption questions into its electronic nutrition assessment. Physicians are requested to ask their patients about consumption at each visit. If the step is skipped, their electronic medical records system generates a reminder alert to complete the nutrition assessment.

The Center has more than 15,000 visits per year. Over the course of 2016, it is focused on monitoring the following outcomes: number of program participants, number of fruit and vegetable prescriptions written, number of prescriptions filled, and fruit and vegetable intake.

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The program is integrated into Hurley Children's Hospital electronic records system making it convenient to print and electronically sign a referral order, just as a physician would for any other type of prescription.

Summary of Best Practices

This document highlights Prescription for Health style programs across Michigan and the organizations, agencies and networks working to foster better health outcomes in our communities. Food insecurity and lack of access to healthy food is a key factor in diet-related diseases. Health care providers understand that maintaining a healthy diet is one of the important actions their patients can take to improve both their physical and mental health. Prescription for Health style programs oftentimes provide an entrance point for health providers to talk with patients about nutrition and food insecurity.

While each program has been designed to reflect the needs of the community and local partners, there are common themes and best practices across Michigan programs:

- As Washtenaw County Public Health stresses, “Partner recruitment is a crucial step in launching the program.” New partnerships between health care providers and local food outlets require thoughtful planning and relationship building. It’s important to make introductions and understand one another’s missions and current programming that may provide a foundation for a Prescription for Health style program. Continued communication with all partners is necessary. Investing in building strong partnerships will help with implementation and can influence the longevity of the program.
- Providing orientation and training for all health care providers involved in the program is essential for success. Busy health care providers need to understand how the program will benefit them and their patients. They need to understand eligibility, the referral process, and how patients will be enrolled. Clear and concise written materials for health care providers and patients will help reinforce topics covered during orientation and training.
- In most cases, a financial incentive is paired with education and support. Patients are given resources to eat more fruits and vegetables and have the opportunity to learn more about the importance of nutritious foods, where they can buy it, how to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables, and ways to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyles. Educational activities may include journaling, cooking demonstrations, food sampling, farmers market tours, children’s activities, and many other creative opportunities. This is necessary to support long-term behavioral change and to improve overall health outcomes.
- Integrating referrals and prescriptions into electronic health records will be important for sustaining and supporting the longevity of these programs. This precedence was started by Hurley Children’s Center in Flint. Integrating the program into electronic records will help with enrollment and evaluation.
- Evaluation is key. Results, even if imperfect and incomplete, allow partners to monitor health outcomes, determine the effectiveness of the program, and consider opportunities for improvement. Every Prescription for Health style program should have an evaluation plan and data collection tools – and use them!

The major challenge shared across programs is funding. All programs still in operation are exploring long-term financial sustainability models. One opportunity may be having health care systems invest in food systems for population health. Collaboration across programs and some standardized evaluation may support efforts across the state for securing funding needed long term.

Summary of Resources

Prescription for Health, Washtenaw County Public Health:
www.ewashtenaw.org/prescriptionforhealth

Fresh Prescription, Ecology Center:
www.ecocenter.org/fresh-prescription



About the Michigan Farmers Market Association

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) was started in 2006 as a statewide association to promote local food consumption in Michigan by connecting more farmers to consumers through farmers markets. Today, MIFMA works with its membership to maintain its mission and attain its vision.

Mission: MIFMA advances farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Vision: MIFMA places farmers markets at the forefront of the local food movement and works to ensure all residents have access to healthy, locally grown food and that Michigan farmers markets receive policy support.

MIFMA defines a farmers market as a public and recurring assembly of farmers or their representatives selling direct-to-consumer food and products which they have produced themselves. In addition, the market may include a variety of vendors as determined by market management. A farmers market is organized for the purpose of facilitating personal connections that create mutual benefits for local farmers, vendors, shoppers and communities.

MIFMA focuses its efforts in five areas: organizational development, policy advocacy, professional development, marketing and increasing food access.

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