

PrimaryOne Health

COLUMBUS, OHIO

UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND FOOD BANK COLLABORATION IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

It started with a student internship in dietetics. Patients with diabetes were taught self-management and given food baskets in collaboration with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Tracking health outcomes, the student showed the positive impact of the nutrition education coupled with food.

PrimaryOne Health (POH) calls that model “produce pass outs.” The Food Bank decided to further couple food distribution with health outcomes, and expanded its partnership with POH to include

produce prescriptions. Any patient found food insecure is given a “produce prescription” to receive food from the Food Bank.

Not only people with diabetes, but all patients at POH are screened for food insecurity using the validated two question form (see Getting Started with your Own Food Insecurity Program, p. 48). The screening is incorporated with other screens such as for depression, dental and visual problems. The center found patients prefer to fill out a paper screening form themselves rather than tell the answers to staff. The self-administered screen is given to the medical assistant who records it in the electronic record.

Produce prescriptions are then faxed to the Food Bank and put in its PantryTrak software system. The prescriptions are viewable at any of the 10 partner food pantries where patients receive their food. Use of the prescriptions is tracked and patient outcomes can be associated with pantry use.

Produce pass outs are not prescription-based and occur at the center sites. Tents and tables are set up outside for a food market. The Food Bank delivers fresh produce to both patients and community members. The center tracks patients who use the market and invites community members to receive health care as new patients.

Same day and walk-in appointments are available at the markets. Enabling services, including enrollment assistance, are also provided. Health education is offered as well as food demonstrations.

The center has hired more dieticians and is expanding the food programs. Dieticians also use screening to refer patients to Meals on Wheels. More partnerships are in the works.

Outcomes are impressive. Over 300 patients have been screened as food insecure, with 54% of these using the produce prescriptions. Of those filling the prescription, 74% showed a decrease in glycated hemoglobin level (HgbA1c), weight loss or both. Over 12,000 individuals have been fed through POH food programs. One quarter of market attendees enrolled in health care while at the markets.

PrimaryOne Health incorporates screening for food insecurity into all visits. Through collaboration with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank, Ohio State University and local partners, they feed over 12,000 people a year and have an evidence-based practice showing improved health outcomes in food recipients.

LESSONS LEARNED

Staff credit their program success to the depth of relationships they have in the community. Investment in student education, collaboration on grants and participation in area events has strengthened their ties with the Ohio State University, Mid-Ohio Food Bank and community members.

The produce pass outs have drawn large numbers of community members to the center. Over half of market users are not current patients. The center enrolled over 600 families into care through market attendance.

Patient preference in screening design is important. Self-administered screens were more successful in identifying and

responding to need. Using one central location for the faxed food prescriptions also helped tracking. Originally, faxes were sent to the ten participating pantries, but the data were lost or discarded. The Food Bank is able to track using its software, which streamlines data collection and follow-up.

Staff learned how much hunger exists in their own area. They tell the story of an unkempt man who appeared homeless and refused all medical services. He did accept produce from the pass out. After receiving a bag of food, he sat on the curb, cracked open a watermelon, and devoured the whole thing. His hunger was raw. He's not a health statistic, but his outcome is real.

INTERVENTIONS

PARTNERING WITH A LOCAL FOOD BANK TO PROVIDE FOOD BASKETS TO 12,000 PEOPLE

OFFERING A PRIVATE, SELF-ADMINISTERED WRITTEN TOOL FOR PATIENTS TO RECORD FOOD INSECURITY AMONG OTHER MEASURES

TRACKING THE IMPACT OF FOOD PROGRAMS TO RECORD A 74% IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH OUTCOMES AFTER FOOD PRESCRIPTION PROGRAMS WERE INTRODUCED

RECRUITING NEW PATIENTS AT 18 FOOD MARKETS

OFFERING SAME-DAY WALK-IN CHECK-UPS AT MARKETS, WITH 6 CENTER SITES PARTICIPATING



PARTNERS

10 FOOD PANTRIES

MEALS ON WHEELS

MID-OHIO FOOD BANK

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

UNITED HEALTH CARE

“ WE WERE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAD IN THE COMMUNITY. ”