Fresh Prescription is a fruit and vegetable prescription program that brings together the healthcare system and the food system, fostering innovative relationships to build a healthy sustainable food system in Detroit. This promising approach to a healthier food system connects patients to fresh, locally-grown produce while providing direct economic benefits to small and midsize farmers. www.ecocenter.org/fresh-prescription

Who are the patients & families impacted by the program?

62% reported struggling with food insecurity
80% reported less than $25,000 in annual household income, with an average of 2-3 people per household
55% received federal food assistance (SNAP benefits)
231 children reached
148 seniors (age 65+) reached

Race/Ethnicity

- Caucasian (4.3%)
- Mexican-American / Latino (18.5%)
- Two or more races (3.1%)
- Asian or other (0.8%)
- African American/Black (73.1%)

235 Participants
+ 655 Household members who shared in the benefits
= 890 Impacted

"It was very healthful and challenging, taking out some foods and adding others. I loved it and I learned a lot!" - Participant

96% of program participants would recommend Fresh Prescription to a friend or relative.

Barriers to accessing fresh fruit & vegetables

- Too expensive
- Poor quality
- Store too far away
- Transportation
- Not available
- Don’t know how to select
- Difficult to prepare

The Fresh Prescription program looks to increase access to fresh, locally-grown produce among vulnerable patients in participating health centers.
The Fresh Prescription Process

1. Primarily low income patients with chronic disease, those who struggle with food insecurity, and caregivers of children age 0-5 are referred to the program by their health care provider.

2. A health professional meets with patients and their families to discuss their health, fruit and vegetable consumption, access to healthy food, motivation to change, and other lifestyle circumstances that impact health.

3. Participants receive a prescription to “eat more fruits and vegetables,” set goals for healthy eating, and receive a first ‘dose’ of healthy eating education.

4. Prescriptions, representing a total value of $40 - $100, can be filled weekly for $10 - $24 of fresh, Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables at a participating farmers market, farm stand, or fresh food box delivery service. This is equal to 7 - 30 servings of fresh produce per week for each program participant and their family.

5. Participants and their families participate in nutrition education and cooking events at weekly markets. Healthcare center staff provide social support for achieving healthy eating goals and making healthy lifestyle changes at the market and through periodic outreach to participants.

The prescription card

In 2016, Fresh Prescription participants were able “fill their prescription” by shopping for produce at any participating local food vendor. Before participants could only shop at the one farmers market/stand connected to their health center. Prescription dollars are loaded onto debit style cards supported by a mobile app that tracks spending so local food vendors can be reimbursed appropriately. This technology is an important step toward providing more options for filling healthy eating prescriptions throughout communities.

Building strong local food systems and healthy communities

“It’s mutually beneficial. [Local food] vendors get more business and participants get healthy food. The connection between the two is invaluable.”

- Local Produce Vendor

70% of participants reported spending their own money to buy fruits and vegetables (in addition to prescription dollars). Most spent $6 or more each time they shopped.

52% of participants were new farmers market shoppers.

84% of participants reported they would shop at the farmers market in the future.
Achieving positive health outcomes
Patients reported significant improvement in overall health status.

After participating in Fresh Prescription:
96% of participants reported they manage their overall health better.
93% of participants reported they manage their chronic health conditions better.

“ My blood sugar is where it is supposed to be now. ”
- Participant

Increasing healthy eating
Patients reported significant improvements in healthy eating.

After participating in Fresh Prescription:
88% of participants reported eating more fresh fruits & vegetables each day.
71% reported that their household members eat more fruits & vegetables each day.

Participants reported a decrease in the number of times per day they consumed unhealthy foods.

88% of participants reported an increase in their knowledge about the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables.
84% of participants reported an increase in knowledge about easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet each day.
75% of participants reported an increase in knowledge about where to buy fruits and vegetables in their community.

“ My husband eats what I cook, and we eat a healthier diet now. We only eat fried foods about once a month now. My grandkids are even enjoying the vegetables I am cooking! ”
- Participant

Changing shopping, cooking & meal preparation behaviors
Patients reported significant improvement in healthy behaviors.

After participating in Fresh Prescription:
73% reported trying new fruits & vegetables.
70% reported buying fruits & vegetables they did not buy in the past.
69% reported cooking with fruits & vegetables they did not cook with before.

“ Kale is brand new to me. I’ve made big changes, and I eat spinach, squash, and collard greens now. I also eat less overall now. ”
- Participant

Increasing knowledge, skills & support for healthy eating
Participants increased their knowledge of how to select, how to prepare and cook, and how to store fresh fruits and vegetables. Participants also increased their perceived ability to count on the people around them for support in eating more fresh fruits and vegetables by the end of the program.

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- Participant

Of the 235 program participants, 232 completed pre-program surveys and 135 completed post-program surveys.
Transforming the health care model

The Fresh Prescription program isn’t just about access to fruits and vegetables. This program brings food into health care and equips health care providers with tools to address healthy eating and food insecurity. Participating clinics teach classes about healthy eating, cooking, and the connection between food & health. Health care providers and health care staff are becoming healthy food ambassadors, connecting patients with healthy resources in their communities.

Health care centers prescribing fruits & vegetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Criteria for referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS)</td>
<td>Referred by provider. Focus on high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, pregnant women, caregivers of kids 0-5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant Community Care (on Michigan Ave.)</td>
<td>Referred by provider. Focus on hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy, and food insecurity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Ford Health System (HFHS)</td>
<td>Referred by provider. Patients with a BMI of 25 or higher. Focus on those with chronic disease and low income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy Southfield CDC with Covenant Community Care</td>
<td>Referred by provider. Focus on those who live in neighborhood without fresh food access, or who are overweight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Primary Care Center</td>
<td>Referred by provider. Focus on chronic disease, including hypertension and diabetes, as well as food insecurity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016 Partners & Supporters:

Peaches & Greens
Detroit Food Policy Council
Mercy Primary Care Center
Eastern Market
Covenant Community Care
J-SCDC
American Indian Health Program
Generation With Promise

Fresh Prescription is a network of participating health centers and local food retailers such as farmers markets and CSA share boxes in Detroit. Coordination support provided by the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, MI.

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Visit www.ecocenter.org/fresh-prescription or call (313) 733-0039