HOSPITALS SOW SEEDS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES
GROWING FARM STANDS AND FARMERS MARKETS IN MICHIGAN

The consumption of unhealthy diets and the lack of healthy food access significantly contribute to the progression of diet-related diseases in Michigan. Fortunately, hospitals are uniquely poised to treat diet-related diseases while simultaneously addressing their root causes through health promotion and disease prevention efforts.

Health care institutions and clinicians are essential to the promotion of healthier lifestyles and have begun to show their support by working to create a healthier food system. Many hospitals are now hosting farmers’ markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pickups for their staff and patients, and they are taking extra steps to improve the health and sustainability of their food service programs. Some have even begun on-site gardens or farms that supply food directly to their cafeterias. By providing food that promotes the health of patients, staff, and the environment, hospitals support a model for community health and wellness that goes far beyond their own walls.

Michigan’s Governor recognizes that consistent access to fruits and vegetables plays an important role in maintaining healthy lifestyles and that government support for initiatives that improve healthy food access is important for their success. His support is demonstrated by encouraging the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDARD) to “focus on ways that Michigan farmers can help alleviate Michigan’s obesity problem.” Farmers’ markets can play a key role in these efforts. Between 1994 and 2011, the number of markets in the United States...
increased by approximately 6,400 to a total of 7,200 farmers’ markets. In addition, offering government-sponsored Nutrition Assistance Programs at farmers’ markets is invaluable in increasing healthy food access.

Looking towards the future, it is clear that health care institutions can help to address public health issues by providing direct access to fresh, local foods and can enhance the economic well-being of local producers and their communities.

**DIGGING DEEPER: HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

**Improved Corporate Wellness Strategy:**
Supporting local food and on-site farmers’ markets can fit well into the corporate wellness strategy of health care institutions. Emphasizing nutrition and exercise can begin to reduce the long-term health costs of the employee workforce, but many leaders in the health care sector are going above and beyond with their current wellness promotion efforts. One such example is Kaiser Permanente, a health system that encourages healthy eating for patients and employees as an integral part of their mission to prevent illness and promote health. This health system offers fifty on-site farmers’ markets throughout their health system and CSA and farm box distribution programs for employees at seven facilities and offices. An on-site farmers’ market or CSA food box program as ways to encourage healthy eating would be beneficial additions to your wellness strategy.

**Increased Publicity:**
Farmers’ markets have also brought many ancillary benefits to health care sites. The largest benefit seen by institutions is often increases in publicity or media coverage. Hospital markets offer a fun, new way to engage neighbors and the surrounding community, and positive publicity often comes in return. Gaining this reputation may bode well for hospitals by changing the public perception of the hospital from a place of sick-care to one of overall health and wellness.

**Economic Health:**
Farmers’ markets and farm stands also may improve local farmers’ profit margins because less money must be spent on distribution. They also help to sustain more businesses and civic institutions and create jobs for local residents. A study of local food systems estimated that the economic impact of direct-to-consumer markets amounted to nearly one billion dollars in 2008. Additionally, a study in 2008 of the Seattle food system found that for every 100 dollars spent at a farmers’ market about 62 dollars is re-spent locally. Part of this extra benefit comes from eliminating the middleman and promoting sales directly between the producer and consumer.

Accepting food assistance programs at farmers’ markets can be a win-win-win situation for food assistance recipients, the farmers and vendors, and the market itself. Food assistance recipients will have increased access to fresh, healthy food and the opportunity to interact with the farmers who grow it. The farmers and vendors who sell at the market will benefit from increased sales and a wider customer base, and in turn, the market will benefit. When your market facilitates a program that helps the economic stability of farmers and vendors, it becomes a valuable tool for vendor recruitment and retention.

**Non-Profit Status:**
Hosting a farmers’ market can also fit into a hospital’s community outreach and benefit programming; non-profit hospitals may be able to report staffing and some expenses under their IRS- Schedule H Community...
Benefit activities. Examples of activities provided in communities that can be reported as community health improvement include increasing access to and the affordability of fresh produce for populations at risk for nutrition-related health problems. Another approach is demonstrated by Backus Hospital, Connecticut, which has subsidized the travel costs to farmers’ markets for patients and families who are overweight or obese.7 Programs like these can be mutually beneficial to the hospital and the community.

STEPS TO STARTING A HOSPITAL-BASED MARKET OR FARM STAND

The process of initiating a hospital farmers’ market varies based on location, size and goals of the market. It is important to check with city ordinances or property managers long before starting the market. It’s also recommended to research what markets are already available in the area and consider complementing them by hosting the market on a different day of the week and/or time of day. Other steps and resources are outlined below; these are just a starting point.

1. Secure internal support from all levels of hospital operations including, administration, operations management, legal services, community and government relations, facilities and housekeeping, food service, and patient services. Broad support from hospital staff is key to successful farmers’ market implementation.

2. Determine the goal(s) you want to achieve by hosting the market (e.g. employee wellness, improved community access to fresh produce) and the guidelines for what is allowed to be sold by vendors (e.g. location within a certain geographic area, produce from one grower, pesticide-free or certified organic produce). If healthy food access is a priority, you may want to explore what is needed to accept the different nutrition assistance programs.

3. Choose the market type (internal, external, or dual-purpose) that will best help you to achieve goals.

4. Identify a site. Key factors in identifying an appropriate site include: unrestricted access by the population to be served, parking and public transportation availability, expected foot traffic, room for expansion, long-term site availability, capacity for number of vendors participating, accessibility to restrooms and trash bins, and ease of loading and unloading for vendors. Do not finalize location until step 5 is completed.

5. Investigate insurance and permit requirements. A hospital’s umbrella insurance policy should be sufficient, but sometimes a rider is needed. Farmers and farmers’ market associations usually have their own insurance policies, but this needs to be confirmed. Local and/or state officials may require a health permit and/or zoning permit. Costs for these items tend to vary depending on the jurisdiction. Permits are often free, but hospitals have been known to pay as much as $1,300, so it is important to find out early in the process. [Click here to see the Michigan Market Self-Inspection Guide]

6. Identify potential day(s), time(s) and seasonal duration for operation of the market.

7. Identify growers/vendors. A local or state farmers’ market managing association can often assist in market planning and farmer outreach. These groups are also knowledgeable about insurance and permit requirements; communicating any vendor standards you have up front. It is recommended to start with a few to several vendors, pending on food traffic, with additional vendors prepared to join in response to consumer demand. Note: Some markets charge the grower/vendor a fee to participate and others do not. Each hospital should assess their need for vendor fees depending on the costs associated with starting and running the market and how much the hospital and other potential partners are willing to contribute to costs such as setup and cleanup, tents and tables, internal and external advertising, and market management.

8. Address logistical issues such as setup, cleanup and signage needed on market day.

9. Advertise the new market and conduct outreach to desired customers. Consider using an internal employee newsletter and/or email communication system to advertise the
market.” Join the Michigan Farmers’ Market Association (MIFMA) to access the Association’s resource network and will increase your market visibility. Consider joining free local food networking websites like Local Harvest or Real Time Farms to spread the word about your new market.

Additional Resources:
- Farmers’ Markets and CSAs on Hospital Grounds
- Public Health Potential of Farmers’ Markets on Medical Center Campuses
- Michigan Farmers’ Market Licensing Requirements
- USDA Guide to accepting SNAP Dollars
- Sample Farmers’ Market Rules

Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak

Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak

IMPROVING HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

While roughly 20% of Michigan residents are dependent upon food stamps, a 40% increase since the beginning of the recession, and nearly 67% of the population is overweight or obese, Michigan will spend nearly 3 billion dollars in medical costs associated with these conditions. Nutrition assistance programs have begun to play a vital role in addressing health and healthcare cost concerns. With the rapid growth of health care supported farm stands, markets and produce carts, nutrition assistance programs are also on the rise. See below for more information regarding the types of programs that are currently offered in Michigan.

SNAP/EBT/BRIDGE CARD:
- **Who is eligible:** Income-qualified, as determined by MI Dept of Human Services (DHS)
- **How it works:** A cashier at a main booth at the farmers’ market will swipe bridge cards for the amount needed and will distribute wooden tokens for that market. Tokens don’t have to be spent the same day.
- **Contact:** Department of Human Services

The Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership offers a five part Resource Binder entitled Accepting Bridge Cards at Michigan Farmers’ Markets to help farmers’ market managers with accepting SNAP benefits. The binder includes the following information:
1. Completing the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Application
2. Obtaining a point of sale device
3. Alternative redemption systems
4. Record keeping
5. Promotion and outreach

The Partnership has also recorded a webinar to complement the resource binder.

WIC PROJECT FRESH:
- **Who is eligible:** WIC participants
- **How it works:** WIC participants must contact the WIC office on or after June 1st to sign up (first come, first serve). Paper coupons are distributed at markets with accompanying nutrition education; coupons can be used for fresh Michigan produce with participating farmers.
- **Available:** June 1st-Oct 31st
- **Contact:** Brittany Hiner, (517) 335-8625
  [http://www.projectfresh.msu.edu](http://www.projectfresh.msu.edu)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Operating Days</th>
<th>Operating Hours</th>
<th>Assisted Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detroit Eastern Market Farm Stand</td>
<td>5635 West Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48209</td>
<td>Fiona Ruddy</td>
<td>313-833-9300, <a href="mailto:fruddy@detroiteasternmarket.com">fruddy@detroiteasternmarket.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thursdays 8:30am - 10:30am, July - October</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Medical Center Sinai-Grace Hospital Farm Stand</td>
<td>6071 West Outer Drive, Detroit, MI</td>
<td>Craig Deleon</td>
<td>313-745-9748, <a href="mailto:Cdeleon2@DMC.org">Cdeleon2@DMC.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fridays 11:00am-2:00pm, June-October</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit Medical Center Farm Stand</td>
<td>1200 W. 11th Street, Traverse City, MI 49684</td>
<td>Michele Nicolai</td>
<td>517-364-2364, <a href="mailto:Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org">Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fridays 11:00am-2:00pm, June-August</td>
<td>Accepts EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Market at Grand Traverse Commons supported by Munson Medical Center</td>
<td>1201 East Michigan Ave. Jackson, Michigan, 49201</td>
<td>Travis Fojtasek</td>
<td>517-788-7378, Thursdays 9:00am-2:00pm May-October</td>
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<td>Thursdays 9:00am-2:00pm May-September</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<td>Home Town Harvest Farmers' Market</td>
<td>3601 West Thirteen Mile Rd.</td>
<td>Eileen Mi-skiewicz</td>
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<td>Every other Wednesdays 11:00am-2:00pm mid-June-October</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<td>Henry Ford Hospital Farmers Market</td>
<td>2799 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48192</td>
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<td>Every other Wednesday 11:00am-2:00pm</td>
<td>Accepts EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<td>ERMC Farmers' Market</td>
<td>3601 West Thirteen Mile Rd.</td>
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<td>Every other Wednesdays 11:00am-2:00pm mid-June-August</td>
<td>Accepts EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaumont Hospital Royal Oak Farmers Market</td>
<td>1215 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI 48912</td>
<td>Michele Nicolai</td>
<td>517-364-2364, <a href="mailto:Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org">Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org</a></td>
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<td>Thursdays 11:00am-5:00pm May-August</td>
<td>Accepts EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allen Street Satellite Farmers' Market at Sparrow Hospital</td>
<td>1500 South Main, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827</td>
<td>Michele Nicolai</td>
<td>517-364-2364, <a href="mailto:Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org">Michele.Nikolai@sparrow.org</a></td>
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<td>Thursdays 11:00am-5:00pm May-August</td>
<td>Accepts EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Wealthy Street Farmers' Market- A collaborative effort between Saint Mary's Health Care, Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital and Advantage Health Physician Network</td>
<td>616-252-5031, <a href="mailto:Lindsay.Burkowski@metrogr.org">Lindsay.Burkowski@metrogr.org</a></td>
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<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
<td>Accepts WIC Project FRESH, Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH, EBT/Bridge Cards, Double Up Food Bucks</td>
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<td>Metro Health Farm Market</td>
<td>5900 Byron Center Ave SW @ M-6, Wyoming, MI 49509</td>
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<td>The Green Market at Allegiance Health</td>
<td>5301 McAuley Dr., Ypsilanti, MI 48197</td>
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<td>The Farm at St. Joe's (St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectrum Health Farmers' Market</td>
<td>1521 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048</td>
<td>Michael Rowe</td>
<td>269-341-6307, <a href="mailto:rowem@bronsonhg.org">rowem@bronsonhg.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
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<td>5500 Armstrong Road, Battle Creek, MI, 49014</td>
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<td>Spartan Health Food Hub Farmers Market</td>
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<td>Metro Health's Harvest Market</td>
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<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectrum Health Farmers' Market</td>
<td>1521 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048</td>
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<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bronson Methodist Hospital Winter Farmers' Market</td>
<td>5500 Armstrong Road, Battle Creek, MI, 49014</td>
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<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metro Health Farmers' Market</td>
<td>6777 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48322</td>
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<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
<td>Accepts Double Up Food Bucks, Project FRESH and EBT/Bridge Cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spartan Health Food Hub Farmers Market</td>
<td>5330 S. Westnedge Ave. Kalamazoo, MI 49008</td>
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<td>Every other Friday 10:30am– 2:00 pm December-April</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Farmers Market</td>
<td>1521 Gull Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49048</td>
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Hospitals Sow Seeds for Healthier Communities

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