

Prescription for Health

2011 Outcome Report



PRESCRIPTION *for* HEALTH

Funded by the Kresge Foundation and coordinated by Washtenaw County Public Health, the Prescription for Health program connects the medical system and the food sector by creating a relationship between clinic staff, their patients, and the local farmers' market. Health care providers write "prescriptions" for their patients to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Participants receive **\$40** in tokens to spend like cash at two local farmers' markets, as well as nutrition education and support during market visits.

In 2011, **311** patients from five local health clinics participated in the program. These patients spent **\$5,967** on fresh fruits and vegetables at the markets, improving their access to produce and providing local farmers with increased income.

Key Findings for All Participants:

- The average daily consumption of fruits and vegetables **increased by nearly one cup per day** from pre- to post-program (mean=0.7, p<.001)
- **96%** of participants agreed that visiting the farmers' market helped them or their family members eat more fruits and vegetables
- **72%** of participants agreed that talking to a health care provider helped them eat more fruits and vegetables
- **91%** of participants agreed that eating more fruits and vegetables would help them manage their health condition(s) better
- **76%** of participants reported setting a personal goal to eat more fruits and vegetables within the past six months
- **73%** of participants reported knowing that a Bridge/EBT card (food stamps) could be used at the farmers' market post-program, compared with only 25% pre-program

Participant Demographics:

- **73%** female
- **44%** African American, **44%** White, **1%** Asian, **4%** Hispanic/Latino and **7%** identified as two or more races or other
- Average age **44**
- **56%** reported having at least one child living in their household

Participants were at high risk for food insecurity:

- **74%** had a yearly income of less than \$15,000
- **62%** had cut the size of meals or skipped meals within the past year because of a lack of money for food
- **62%** use a Bridge/EBT card

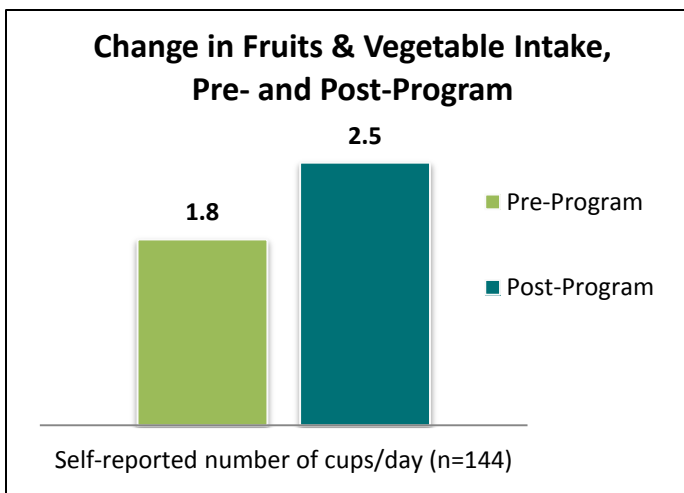
*Special thanks to our clinic and farmers' market partners:
Neighborhood Family Health Center, Packard Health, The Corner
Health Center, New Hope Outreach Clinic, the Downtown Ypsilanti
Farmers' Market and Westside Farmers' Market.*

How the program worked:

Clinic staff identified patients for the program based on food access difficulties, chronic disease risk, and interest. Using a Prescription for Health “prescription” card, staff indicated the patient’s health issues and goals for healthier eating.

When a patient came to the Prescription for Health table at the farmers’ market, Washtenaw County Public Health (WCPH) staff reviewed his or her prescription card and provided nutrition education and support accordingly. WCPH staff offered recipes featuring a fruit or vegetable currently available at the market as well as materials describing how greater consumption of fruits and vegetables affects chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity.

After the educational support, the patient would exchange one of his or her coupons for \$10 in tokens to spend on produce at the farmers’ market.

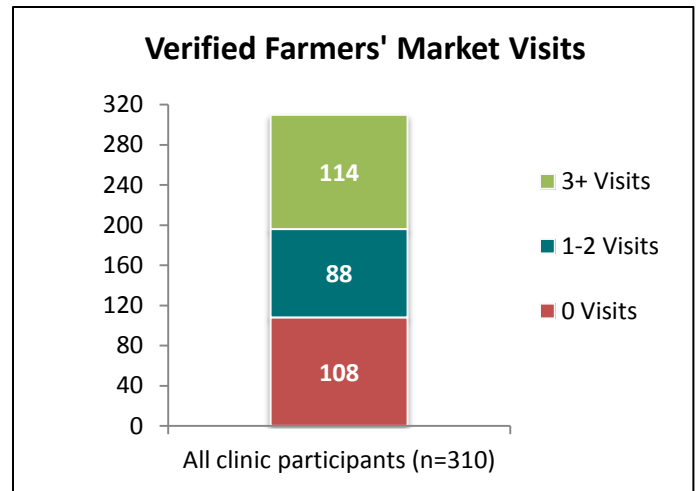


“[I was] in a really bad place with blood pressure and depression. Now I’m getting better. The program gave me a better understanding of my health.”

- Prescription for Health Patient

“[This program is a] win-win – it links people who need access to food with those who grow it locally.”

-Clinic Staff Member



Post-program survey results:

Post-program survey results were obtained from **67%** of program participants.

The post-program survey showed that **77%** of participants found the recipes and other materials useful, and **57%** of participants reported learning new ways of using fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks as a result of the program.

Of the patients who visited the market at least once, **61%** used other forms of payment to buy additional food at the market, and **98%** stated they were likely to visit the market again in the future.

The most common reasons for patients not visiting the market were transportation issues and market days/times not suitable.

Clinic staff outcomes:

Clinic staff reported that the program was easy to administer and personally rewarding. The program provided a reason to talk to patients about nutrition, and staff liked being able to provide tangible access to healthy food. After the program ended, staff indicated they are now more likely to refer patients to the farmers’ market and other healthy food resources.

March 2012