

Food as Medicine: Little Rivers Food Farmacy

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- ▶ LRHC began our Food Farmacy in 2020 receiving 200-300lbs of fresh food from Willing Hands weekly. We now receive between 800 lbs in the winter months and over 1200 lbs a week in the summer months. Little Rivers also receives approximately 7000 lbs of food from the Vermont Food Bank to support our Food Farmacy. In the summers of 2024 and 2025, we distributed 180 CSA shares from Root 5 Farm, resulting in 15 families receiving the CSA for 12 consecutive weeks. On September 13, 2025, we held a “stuff the van” food drive at the Bradford Hannaford after they donated a cargo van to Little Rivers Food Farmacy program
- ▶ Food as medicine affirms the premise that access to nutritious food is critical to health and well-being by managing and preventing diet responsive conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and coronary artery diseases
- ▶ Studies have shown half of American adults have one or more preventable chronic diseases, many of these are related to poor quality eating patterns
- ▶ 8% of LRHC patients are food insecure and 75% have at least one chronic disease diagnosis
- ▶ Currently the Fresh Food Farmacy program serves 100 patients. We currently have a three-week rotation for food from the food farmacy
- ▶ Food as medicine affirms the premise that access to nutritious food is critical to health and well-being by managing and prevention of diet responsive conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and coronary artery disease.
- ▶ Anyone that has been to the grocery store recently can attest to the fact that eating healthy is expensive and getting more expensive. Patients and families who are food insecure often rely on cheaper processed food that have little or no nutritional value than healthier fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and lean protein meats. Think about the difference in cost between a box of Kraft macaroni and cheese at 1.50, a box that will feed 4. While the average cost to make a basic homemade garden salad for four people is approximately \$5-\$10, depending on ingredient choices and seasonality.

- ▶ My goal for Little Rivers Food Farmacy has been to create a dignified, welcoming and comfortable atmosphere where free healthy food can be easily accessed by patients to use food as medicine to manage, treat and prevent diet responsive chronic diseases in our rural community. It touches a special place in my heart when patients talk to me about how their lives and their health have benefited from having access to Little Rivers Food Farmacy.
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