



American
Heart
Association.

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES IN VERMONT VIA FOOD IS MEDICINE



As an example of Food is Medicine programming in Vermont, three Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) integrated healthy food access into health care to improve cardiovascular health outcomes and address food insecurity. All three FQHCs implemented successful programs unique to the needs of their communities.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:



Statistically significant decreases in blood pressure and cholesterol among enrolled patients with or at risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD)



205%

increase in food insecurity
screening rates (2022-2024)



279

patients served in the food
is medicine programs



1,992

educational opportunities
offered to patients

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS BY HEALTH CENTER:



Lamoille Health Partners (LHP): Medically Tailored Meals & Groceries (2022-2025)

LHP screened for patients who had CVD, or were at elevated risk for CVD, and were facing food insecurity. Eligible patients were connected with a network of food delivery partners, including Moms Meals, Meals on Wheels, and Instacart, to receive heart-healthy groceries and medically tailored meals at home. In addition to food access, LHP offered cooking classes to build long-term nutrition skills for patients. Despite its successes, the program concluded in the spring of 2025 due to the end of grant funding and the absence of sustainable reimbursement mechanisms in Vermont.



Little Rivers Health Care (LRHC): Food Farmacy & Produce Prescription (2022-present)

At LRHC, patients are screened for food insecurity at check-in using the Hunger Vital Signs tool via an iPad. When a patient screens positive and has CVD or CVD risk factors, they are referred to the Food Farmacy Program. The Food Farmacy provides tailored food boxes designed to prevent and mitigate chronic conditions. It is supported by Willing Hands and the Vermont Foodbank. During summer months, LRHC offers community-supported agriculture (CSA) shares to participating patients through a partnership with Root 5 Farm, ensuring access to fresh produce, while simultaneously supporting local farms.



Northern Tier Center for Health: Social Grocery Store & Produce Prescription (2022-present)

Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH) operates a nonprofit social grocery store in Richford ensuring year-round access to affordable, fresh, and nutrition foods for residents in this remote rural region. Patients who have or are at risk for chronic health conditions, and screen positive for food insecurity, may enroll in a seasonal produce prescription CSA program delivered in partnership with Healthy Roots Collaborative. The program brings fresh fruits and vegetables weekly to patients across Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Cooking and nutrition education classes are offered to patients.

WHY IT MATTERS:

These programs demonstrate that integrating food access into primary care can measurably improve patient health, strengthen community partnerships and address the root causes of chronic disease.

IMPORTANT TO VERMONT PATIENTS:

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps Health Care Share (HCS) 2024-2025

"The vegetables have been great in helping me lose weight, reduce my A1C level, and cholesterol and fat levels."

"The HCS has extended my life and I've lost 20 pounds in the past six months. I'm so appreciative."

"I live alone and have limited mobility due to RA. It's very hard to shop and even drive. This wonderful program helped me so much, not just financially, but by reducing my physical and mental stress."

"My health soars during the months I get my share."

Vermont Farmers Food Center

Farmacy Patient 2020: "Since I started the program a year ago to date, I have lost 130 pounds and was able to get off my heart med - Foley cancer center is thrilled."

Farmacy Patient 2021: "I've lost 147 pounds I just want to continue to eat healthy and stay well. It's this program that helped me to do this in the first place."

Food Farmacy 2025

"In the past I would never go to the store and buy vegetables but now that I'm getting them from the Food Farmacy it has been a whole learning experience and I am using them all and it has totally changed my eating habits, my health and my mood. I am an old lady and am home alone a lot and in the winter especially having all this food gives me something to do and keeps me busy as well as healthy. I do not know what I would do without it." - Bradford, VT

Meets the Health Care Goals of the Vermont Food Security Roadmap to utilize the health care system to identify and address chronic disease including:

- Invest in frameworks for produce prescriptions
- Expand and invest in medically-tailored food supports
- Invest in community health workers

**FOOD SECURITY
IN VERMONT:
ROADMAP TO 2035**

*farm*to*plate*

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Support from Providers

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.

– Maureen B. Boardman, Provider, Little Rivers Health Care

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For more information, contact: Tina Zuk, American Heart Association, tina.zuk@heart.org or Jamie Rainville and Kristen Bigelow Talbert, Bi-State Primary Care Association, jrainville@bistatepca.org or kbigelow@bistatepca.org

Sources:
[Bi-State Primary Care Association;](#)
[Vermont Youth Conservation Corps](#)