Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force
Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (RxforFFV) Pilot Program

About Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
A four-month program in partnership with local clinics and retailers to assist low-income, food insecure individuals with diabetes and prediabetes in managing their condition by providing access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Diabetes Type Among Participants
Prediabetes: 8.3%
Gestational: 4.2%
Type 1: 16.7%
Type 2: 70.8%

Program Strengths
Vetting potential program participants before enrollment minimized attrition and ensured participants were set up for success
Monthly, in-person visits supported participation & retention
Access to medical nutrition therapy & diabetes education improved behavior change and A1c levels
Embedding a food insecurity screener into electronic medical records strengthened clinic partnerships

Program Results
13.36% increase in self-reported health status among participants between pre/post surveys
20.8% increase in average daily cups of fruits and vegetables between pre/post surveys

Vouchers
$10,120 dispersed
85.2% redeemed

Participants who redeemed vouchers at >90% saw a 40.6% increase in average daily cups of F&V, while those who redeemed at <90% only saw a 5% increase.

Access to fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost assists diabetic and prediabetic individuals in managing their condition and decreasing HbA1c

Pre HbA1c 8.69
mean HbA1c - 1.11
Post HbA1c 7.58

“We received really good, great feedback from our patients. They really did eat more fruits and vegetables. I saw people with better blood sugars, A1c improvement, weight loss.”
-Clinic Provider
Food is a main contributor to health and chronic conditions. Recognizing this, the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force (IHRTF) started a Food as Medicine program in 2015. Over the past five years, it evolved into a produce prescription pilot program called Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (RxforFFV). RxforFFV is designed to assist low-income, food insecure individuals with diabetes and prediabetes in managing their condition by providing improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables through partnerships with local clinics and retailers. IHRTF, with support from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, partnered with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition to conduct an evaluation of its RxforFFV pilot program in 2019-20.

How the program works:

- Participating clinics administer a two-item food security screener (Hunger Vital Sign™) and an HbA1c test to potential participants.
- Low-income, food insecure individuals with diabetes and prediabetes are referred to IHRTF, who then enrolls participants in the four-month program.
- Participants take a pre-program survey that assesses fruit and vegetable consumption, health status, and other related factors.
- At monthly support and education check-ins, participants are provided with vouchers that can only be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating retailers.
- Upon completion of the program, participants take a post-program survey and a post-program HbA1c test is administered.

The evaluation data indicate that the RxforFFV program was an overwhelming success based on the following results:

- **Program retention.** 84.2% of enrollees completed the program.
- **Voucher redemption.** More than $10,000 in vouchers were distributed, 85.2% of which were redeemed.
- **Perceived health.** Participants perceived their general health status to be better upon program completion as compared to when they started the program.
- **Health outcomes.** HbA1c values decreased by 12.77%, from an average of 8.69 to 7.58 (p=0.001).
- **Fruit and vegetable intake.** Participants increased their daily fruit and vegetable intake by 20.8% (p=0.0181).
- **Qualitative feedback.** Participants reported overall satisfaction with the program, tried new fruits and vegetables for the first time, experienced weight loss and other health benefits, and became more confident in their cooking skills.

The RxforFFV program had a positive impact across all program stakeholders.

- **Program participants.** Participants’ access to fresh produce was increased through the distribution of vouchers, and they experienced improved health outcomes and fruit and vegetable intake.
- **Retailers.** Retailers had the opportunity to gain a new customer base and serve their community by offering the RxforFFV program at their stores.
- **Clinics.** Clinics and health care providers were able to provide critical screening and connect participants to IHRTF, contributing to an important community-clinical linkage toward the goal of chronic disease prevention and management.

If you are interested in learning more about the Rx for FFV Pilot Program, or other initiatives of the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force, email info@idahohunger.org or call 208-447-8218.