A Handy Guide to PRODUCE PRESCRIPTIONS

The US healthcare system spends $50B a year treating diet-related chronic illnesses. 10% of households are food insecure and do not have access to healthy foods. Food security and healthy food access are linked with improved health outcomes.

What’s a produce prescription?
A Produce Prescription Program is a medical treatment or preventative service for patients who are eligible due to a diet-related health risk or condition, food insecurity or other documented challenges in access to nutritious foods, and are referred by a healthcare provider or health insurance plan. These prescriptions are fulfilled through food retail and enable patients to access healthy produce with no added fats, sugars, or salt, at low or no cost to the patient. When appropriately dosed, Produce Prescription Programs are designed to improve healthcare outcomes, optimize medical spend, and increase patient engagement and satisfaction. [National Produce Prescription Collaborative]

Who are produce prescriptions for?
- People with low incomes
- People with health risks
- People who lack access to healthy food

Program results point to improvements in...
- Hemoglobin A1c levels for patients with diabetes
- Nutrition and health outcomes for patients with hypertension
- Food security for households with children and expectant mothers
- Preterm birth rate among women with low-incomes

Produce prescriptions are:
- Patient-Centered
- Cost-Effective
- Preventative

Cost-effective
A 2019 microsimulation study estimated implementing fruit and vegetable incentives for all Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries over a lifetime could lead to significant health improvements and be highly cost-effective.*** The model estimated that the intervention could:
- Saved in formal healthcare costs****
- 2M cardiovascular events (e.g., stroke, heart attack) prevented

FOOD IS MEDICINE

Learn more at dcgreens.org/produce-prescriptions

* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6677179/
*** https://innovation.cms.gov/innovation-models
**** Over a lifetime of Medicare and/or Medicaid participants