PRESCRIBING HEALTH IN RURAL COMMUNITIES:
The Power of Partnership in Advancing Access to Nutrition and Physical Activity

October 3, 2023

2023 Michigan Premier Public Health Conference
The Prescription for Health project and this presentation were supported in part by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors. You can find more information about the Health Fund at mihealthfund.org.

The content of the presentation is that of the presenters and does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Health Fund.
Prescription for Health
Presenting Team

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BS, CHES®

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BS
Objectives

1. Describe 3-4 ways that “prescription” model programs can be adapted to meet the unique needs and assets of a community.

2. Define social determinants of health and equity as understood in a food and nutrition system.

3. Identify 3-5 challenges that “prescription for health/nutrition” model programs pose, as well as 3-5 ways that challenges can be addressed to improve reach and outcome measures.
Alignment with Conference Objective

Identify models to empower community partnerships and lead innovations in public health services.
About Prescription for Health

- Funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, FY20-FY22 (no-cost extension due to COVID-19 Pandemic)
- Facilitated through the regional Northwest Michigan Chronic Disease Prevention Coalition (NMCDPC)
- District Health Department #10 Fiduciary
  - Subcontracts with health system partners
Project Goals

Through collaboration with healthcare facilities, food retailers, and additional community partners, the Prescription for Health program will be implemented and maintained in each of 10 counties in the jurisdiction to achieve the following:

- Enroll at least 1,000 people who are at risk for chronic disease by Year 3.
  - At least 100 participants in each of the 10 counties will complete nutrition and physical education programming by Year 3.
  - At least 100 participants in each of the 10 counties will receive fruit and vegetable vouchers and redeem at local food retailer and/or farmers markets by Year 3.
- At least 10 retail food outlets in the DHD#10 jurisdiction will complete a food availability and affordability assessment, develop an Action Plan and implement at least one systems or environmental change strategy to increase healthy food access.
1. Participant Enrolls

2. Participant Completes Education/Referred to Education

3. Participant Receives Voucher/Bagged Groceries after Completing Education

4. Participant Completes Program Evaluation (6-month Post Survey)
Rx for Health Project Outcomes
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th># Enrolled</th>
<th># Received Education</th>
<th># Vouchers Dist</th>
<th># Bags Issued</th>
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<td>315</td>
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<td>June-Sept 2021</td>
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<td>Feb-April 2022</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4,325</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,368</strong></td>
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<td>Provider</td>
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<td># Completed Education</td>
<td># Vouchers Distributed</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Baldwin Family Healthcare</td>
<td>903</td>
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<td>Munson Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee</td>
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<td>Munson Grayling</td>
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<td>Spectrum Health Big Rapids</td>
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<td>Spectrum Health Gerber</td>
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<td>Spectrum Health Ludington</td>
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<td>Mercy Health (Oceana)</td>
<td>308</td>
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<td>MSU-E- Crawford, Kalkaska, Manistee, Mecosta, Missaukee, and Wexford</td>
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<td><strong>DHD#10 Outreach</strong></td>
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<td>Kalkaska County (Farmer’s Market, Council on Aging, MSU-E, MIHP)</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceana County (New Era Farmer’s Market, Telamon, Our Friend’s House, Book Walk event)</td>
<td>114</td>
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<td>Manistee County (SNAP-Ed “Linking Lessons” class)</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>Mason County (Bike Rodeo event, SNAP-Ed programming)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>bagged groceries</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>3,057</td>
<td>3,912</td>
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MSU-E Post-Survey (n=181)

- 48% reported increased participation in moderate physical activity
- 41% made small changes in their daily routine to be more active
- 49% planned meals in advance more often
- 46% reported an increase in fruit consumption
- 37% reported an increase in vegetable consumption
DHD#10 Post-Survey (n=122)

• 76% of participants reported adding more fruits and vegetables to their shopping list
• 43% have tried new fruits or vegetables
• 43% have tried new recipes
• 75% reported an increase in knowledge or motivation to eat more fruits and vegetables
• 56% noticed improvements in their health
  ○ 35% indicated losing weight as a result of participating
For me, it served as a reminder of the things I already knew. But more importantly, it has motivated me to get back to work eating right and exercising again. In the short time I’ve been doing this, I feel better and see results already, so thank you for that.

The Prescription for Health project implemented in Oceana County was successful in connecting healthcare providers with nutrition educators, public health, and the food retail sector by creating community-clinical linkages and strengthening relationships to increase access to healthy food choices for low-income and populations living with or at risk for chronic disease.

Per a statement from an anonymous Tai Chi participant, “the anonymity of this program is part of its beauty. It has allowed those that I know for a fact would not have asked for help, to gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This, as well as its attachment as a reward for movement allows people to feel as though they have ‘earned it’.”
Promotional Reach

Reached an estimated total of 23,479 through boosted social media posts (January-July 2022)
5 Reasons To Eat
THE RAINBOW

1. Power boost
   Give your meals a vitamin and mineral power boost.

2. Load up on the good stuff!
   Free from trans-fat, cholesterol, and saturated fat.

3. Weight management
   High in fiber and water making you feel fuller for longer.

4. All forms count!
   Load up on fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables so you can enjoy some now and later.

5. Prevention
   Helps lower risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and some types of cancers.

Reason to Eat the RAINBOW
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

- High in vitamins and minerals.
- Lowers risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and some types of cancers.

District Health Department #10
Healthy People Healthy Communities

We welcome SNAP EBT Customers
For information on applying for SNAP benefits, call 1-800-222-5929.

FAMILY FARE.
Snapshot Oceana County, Michigan

Census at a Glance:
Population: 26,973
Race:
  - White, non-hispanic 81%
  - Black 1.2%
  - American Indian 1.5%
Ethnicity:
  - Hispanic/Latino 15.5% (state average: 5.0%)
Percentage of Spanish-speakers: 11.0% (state average: 8.9%)

Top three areas of agriculture production (by volume of sales):
  - Fruits, tree nuts, and berries
  - Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes
  - Hogs and pigs
Oceana County Strategy

DHD#10 partnered with the Health Project (Trinity Health) to implement the Prescription for Health Program in Oceana County.

Strategy 1: Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables **AND** increase physical activity opportunities for residents at high risk for chronic disease

Strategy 2: Increase access to fruits and vegetables and other healthy choices by creating and/or building upon business relationships

Strategy 3: Decrease rates of chronic disease and death and disability from chronic disease through intentional community partner collaboration
Key Community Partners

Key people and organizations providing Oceana County residents educational programming:

- District Health Department #10
- Trinity Health Medical Group Primary Care - Shelby
- Michigan State University Extension
- Our Friends House
- Mary Ann Bush - Tai Chi for Health, Instructor
- Oceana County Council on Aging
- EnerG Fitness
- Lakeside Rehab Family Fitness
Key Business Partners

Key businesses providing Oceana County residents with local produce:

- New Era Farmer’s Market
- Hansen Foods
- Rennhack Orchards Market
Promotional Activities:

1. Press Releases
2. Radio Interviews
3. Social Media Posts
4. Flyers/Posters
Examples of Promotional Activities:

**DHWO#22 and MERCY HEALTH URGES RESIDENTS OF OCEANA COUNTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH PROGRAM**

February 18, 2022 - District Health Department #10 (DHWO#22) and Mercy Health are unveiling the 2022 version of their popular program, urging residents to participate in the Prescription for Health Program which is now available in Oceana County!

**Promotional Activities:**
- [Press Release #1](#)

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**TRY THE PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH PROGRAM!**

Receive a voucher worth $20 to purchase fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables for each nutrition education session attended.

**How does the program work?**
- You must attend a nutrition education session.
- You will get a voucher worth $20 for each session you attend.
- You can buy fruits and vegetables with the voucher(s) you get from the education sessions.

**How do I Register?**
- Complete the referral form at tinyurl.com/Prescription or scan the QR code. Then fill out the Coordinators’ Registration Form and nutrion education sessions.

**Where can I use the voucher?**
- Hawaiian Foods
- 2705 W Rich Rd, Hart, MI 49420
- Mon.-Sat. 9am-9pm, Sun. 9am-7pm

**How do I get vouchers?**
- Fill out and sign the referral form.
- The referral form will be sent to the Prescription Coordinator who will mail vouchers and contact you about upcoming nutrition sessions.

**For more information, contact Catalina Buirillo at 231-872-3369 or Catalina.Buirillo@mercyhealth.com**

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**DHWO#20 AND TRINITY HEALTH ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL FOOD VOUCHER LOCATIONS IN OCEANA COUNTY**

July 27, 2022 - District Health Department #10 (DHWO#20) and Trinity Health are pleased to announce new locations, in addition to Hawaiian Foods, accepting Prescription for Health vouchers in Oceana County.

**How do I use the voucher?**
- You must attend a nutrition education session.
- You will get a voucher worth $20.
- You can use the voucher at any of the participating locations.

**How can I get vouchers?**
- Fill out and sign the referral form.
- The referral form will be sent to the Prescription Coordinator who will contact you about upcoming nutrition education sessions.

**For more information, contact Catalina Buirillo at 231-872-3369 or Catalina.Buirillo@mercyhealth.com**

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**DHWO#10 and MERCY HEALTH ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL FOOD VOUCHER LOCATIONS IN OCEANA COUNTY**

July 27, 2022 - District Health Department #10 (DHWO#10) and Mercy Health are pleased to announce new locations, in addition to Hawaiian Foods, accepting Prescription for Health vouchers in Oceana County.

**Press release #2**

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**DHWO#10 and MERCY HEALTH ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL FOOD VOUCHER LOCATIONS IN OCEANA COUNTY**

July 27, 2022 - District Health Department #10 (DHWO#10) and Trinity Health are pleased to announce new locations, in addition to Hawaiian Foods, accepting Prescription for Health vouchers in Oceana County.

**Press release #3**

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**Examples of Promotional Activities:**

**Press release #1**

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**Examples of Promotional Activities:**

**Press release #2**

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**Examples of Promotional Activities:**
Examples of Promotional Activities:

Social media posts
Registration Process

The Health Project took the template for the Prescription for Health Referral form that DHD#10 provided and turned it into a google form so people could self-refer themselves into the program. Due to the nature of our county, the form was also translated and placed online in Spanish.

Prescription for Health Self-Referral Form

Prescription (Rx) for Health is a program that refers you to nutrition education programs and gives you vouchers to buy fruits and vegetables at participating locations. **Disclaimer: participation in Rx for Health is not income based.

Email *
Valid email

This form is collecting emails. Change settings

Registro para el Programa de Receta para la Salud

El programa de Receta para la Salud ("Prescription for Health" en inglés) le refiere a clases y discursos sobre la formación de nutrición y Ud puede recibir cupones de $20.00 para comprar frutas y verduras al asistir cada sesión.
Redeemable Vouchers

Those who enrolled in the program and attend evidenced-based nutrition education and/or exercise programming were able to earn vouchers to purchase fresh, canned, or frozen fruits and vegetables.

We chose to have our vouchers be in $5 increments for easy spending.

Participants could join as many classes as they’d like, but could only earn up to $120 in vouchers.
COVID-19 Challenges

The pandemic threw us into a world of unknowns:

• The first two years were drastically impacted as priorities for our health care partners shifted into survival mode. The program was finally implemented beginning in January 2022.
• In-person classes had to pivot into online classes.
• Annual outreach screening events did not take place.
TO: Prescription for Health Grant
DATE: 1/13/2023
RE: Program success

I am a recipient of Prescription for Health funding. I completed an eight-week Balance class offered by Oceana’s Council on Aging. As the result of my participation, I was awarded $120.00 in Prescription for health dollars distributed by Mercy Health Project.

Prescription for Health was a gift. As an individual living with a chronic disease, I must practice diligence in what I consume. I do not qualify for food assistance, yet rising prices adversely affected my food budget.

Prescription for Health allowed me to shop at my favorite community farmer’s markets and fruit/vegetable stands. Due to the certificates being released at the beginning of summer, I was able to purchase locally grown produce in season when it was fresh and abundant (cheap). I preserved fruits and vegetables for the winter by canning and freezing. I know where my food came from and, because I control the recipe, what’s in it (no sodium).

For example, towards the end of the season tomatoes were $12.50 a half bushel. I produced Quarts of whole tomatoes and tomato juice. I made pints of tomato soup and salsa. I always keep a quart or pint on the shelf for entry in the county fair the following year!

I love that Prescription for Health not only impacted Senior Citizens, but the local agricultural and retail communities profited as well. I also appreciated that the coupons could be used for frozen or canned fruits and vegetables should one be unable to process their own fresh produce.

This program was genius and went far in putting knowledge and healthy eating into the consciousness of local seniors.
Snap Shot
Kalkaska County

Census at a Glance
- Population: 17,725
- Poverty Rate: 16.4%
- Lack of Adequate access to healthy foods: 15.6%
- Race: White alone, not Hispanic or Latino- 92.4%
- Hispanic or Latino: 2.8%

*Data from DataUSA 2020 Census

Top 3 Agricultural Products
- Poultry and eggs
- Vegetables
- Hay
Kalkaska County Strategy

DHD#10 staff partnered with the staff at Kalkaska Farmer’s Market to provide direct education to participants while simultaneously encouraging the consumption of local fruits and vegetables.
Examples of Promotional Materials

Thank you for your interest in the Prescription for Health Program! Through this program, you are eligible to receive up to 5x in vouchers to buy fruits and vegetables.

**How does the program work?**
- You must attend a nutrition education session
- You will get a voucher worth $x for each session you go to
- You buy fruits and vegetables with the voucher(s) you get from the education sessions

**Where can I use the vouchers?**
- **(location) - (address) - (day/times open)** (day/times open)

**How do the vouchers work?**
- Vouchers come in 5x amounts
- You can only use them at participating locations
- You have to spend all 5x at one time - you will not get cash back
- You can only buy fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- You have to use all of your vouchers before expiration date

**How can I get vouchers?**
- Fill out and sign the referral form
- The referral form will be sent to the Prescription for Health Coordinator who will contact you about upcoming nutrition education sessions
- Attend one (or more) education sessions

**What kinds of nutrition education classes will the Prescription for Health Coordinator refer me to?**
- **(name of class - short description)**
- **(name of class - short description)**

For more information, contact the Prescription for Health Coordinator at [phone] or [email]
Registration and Implementation

Educational Components:
• Eat the rainbow - White, Yellow, Red, Purple/Blue, Green
• Featured items of the week lesson
• Recipe Demonstration once a month
• How the different nutrients in fruits and vegetables benefit the body
Activity #1
Taking home Rx

What are some ways that you could adapt a prescription model nutrition program in your community?

Which partners would you engage and why?
Activity #2
Referrals

What changes would you make?

Is there a way to improve upon the referral form or process?
Project Challenges

• Complexity of Project
  ◦ County- and provider-specific modifications

• COVID-19 Impact
  ◦ Delayed start and drop-off for specific communities/partners

• Sustainability of the Program

• Project Capacity & Maintenance
  ◦ Staffing turnover and changes throughout project; changes with staff processes
  ◦ Illegible or incomplete enrollment forms
  ◦ Low response rate for post-survey
Addressing Challenges to Improve Outcomes

- **Complexity**: maintaining communication and oversight structure
- **COVID-19 impact**: adapt to virtual programming, self-enrollment
- **Sustainability**: example: CDC REACH Grant
- **Capacity and maintenance**: staff training, partner resources and support; process and evaluation adjustments

Be flexible, be kind, and celebrate successes!
Lessons Learned: SDoH and Equity Considerations in a Food System

What are the SDoH impacting food access?

- Rural communities → food deserts
- Transportation challenges
- Internet access
- Language barriers and limitations
- Healthcare access and provider shortages
- Accessibility for disabilities
- Systemic injustices
- Others?
What could food system equity look like?
QUESTIONS
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