



# Food Farmacy Program Annual Report

2023

# 2023 Presbyterian Community Health Food Farmacy Program Annual Report

**523**

Unique patients served by the program. This means all referred patients who attended the program at least once in 2023.

**45**

Referring practices

**126**

Referring Providers

**80%**

Percentage of participants who are members of the Presbyterian Health Plan.

**107,902**

Pounds of food distributed.

**36%**

Average % of local produce distributed overall.



## Summary

The Food Farmacy is an innovative approach to increasing access to healthy food and nutrition education. Health care providers screen patients for food insecurity and refer individuals and families that need access to food and/or may need more nutritious foods to help meet their health goals. In this referral-based program, patients and members receive fresh and healthy food weekly to supplement their diet for one year. All Food Farmacy patients have access to a registered dietitian and cooking classes that offer tailored nutrition education and support at our Teaching Kitchens.

The Food Farmacy has two main goals:

- To **increase food access** among Presbyterian patients and health plan members in Central New Mexico who screen positive for food insecurity.
- To **improve healthy eating** among food insecure Presbyterian patients and health plan members in Central New Mexico who have been diagnosed with a diet-related chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, and/or hypertension.



**Participation by Age Group, 2023 (N=527 )**

Age (years)	%/total qty
0-17	11% (57)
18-24	4% (21)
25-34	4% (19)
35-44	6% (33)
45-54	12% (61)
55-64	19% (100)
65+	45% (236)

**47**

Average age of Farmacy participants



**Top 3 Zip Codes by Food Farmacy Site**

Site	Zip Codes
Resource Center	87110
	87108
	87112
Las Estancias	87121
	87105
	87031



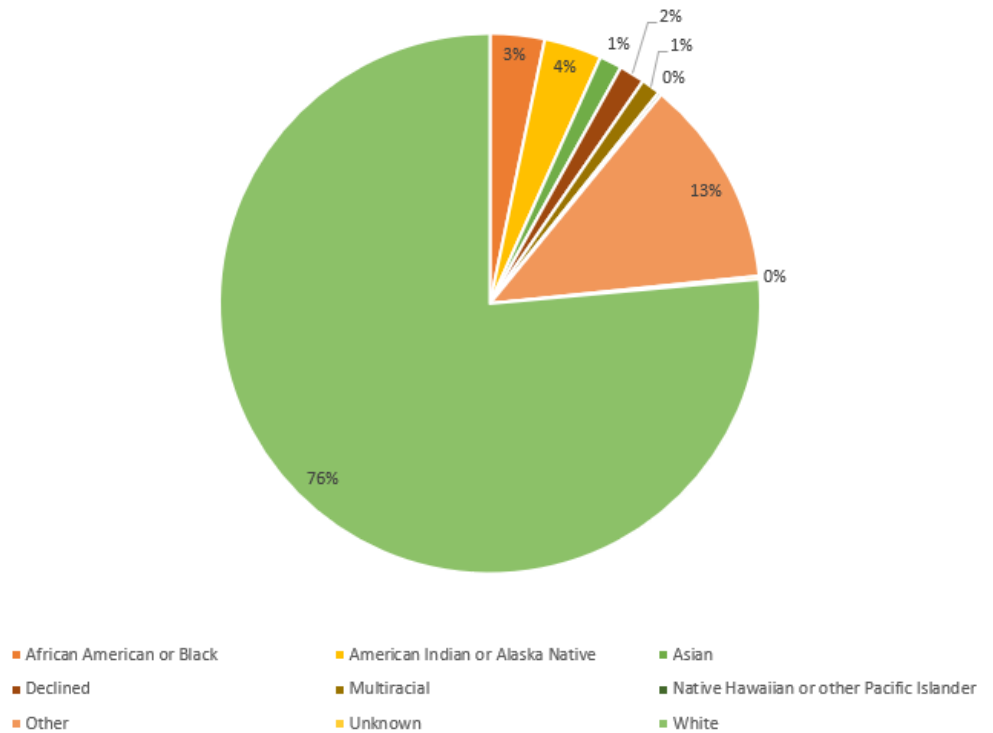
**The Food Farmacy has two distribution locations:**

1. *Community Health Resource Center* opened at Kaseman Hospital in northwest Albuquerque in 2018
2. *Las Estancias Presbyterian Medical Group* opened in southwest Albuquerque in 2019

Site	CHRC	LE
Active Patients	319	208
Referring providers	183*	59*

\*note: not unique providers; may overlap between clinics

**Fig 1. Participant Breakdown by Race (N=518)**



59% of patients identify as Hispanic or Latino

*"Thanks to this program I eat more fruits and I'm learning different ways to prepare the vegetables. I look forward to picking up my bag every week, it's like Christmas every week!"*  
- Participant



***"Since participating, I am down to 267 pounds and my blood sugar is down. I lowered my A1c one point and am no longer in prediabetes range. Thank you for the healthy choices"***



***"This food has made me so healthy. It means so much to me – fresh fruit + best tasting vegetables! The Food Farmacy staff always greet us with a smile – good people."***

Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation's generous support covers a portion of the food costs.



# WHAT we served



- (on average) bags comprised of 67% vegetables
- (on average) bags comprised of 33% fruits

**9 lbs** Average weight of the bags

**42 servings** Average number of servings per week\*

**\$18** Weekly price of the bag per patient  
20% discount on CSA bags

\*servings calculated using FDA serving sizes, URLs available upon request  
Examples of items really increase # of servings: avocados (5 per fruit), lettuce (6 per head), garlic (9 per bag)



**17** local farms supported



## Food Farmacy Evolution

The Food Farmacy program at Presbyterian began in 2018 in Albuquerque at the Community Health Resource Center in Presbyterian Kaseman Hospital under the framework of Food as Medicine. Initially, the Food Farmacy was set up a choice-based, walk-through model, like a grocery store, where referred patients walked through the site with volunteers, choosing fresh produce, pantry staples, and refrigerated items.

However, this model is very high-contact. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency, we transitioned to a drive-through pick-up model. This ensured a safer patient experience, since there is less contact-time, requires less staff capacity, and creates an overall more efficient process. In our current model, each patient comes to our "drive through" and receives a bag of fresh produce, supplemented with dry goods once a month, in conjunction with Easy Eats cooking classes. This is a more convenient option for many of our patients who have mobility issues. We also offer Uber Health rides for patients who do not have access to transportation. Though there is less patient contact time with a drive-through model, Food Farmacy still offers social connection. Volunteers chat with the patients at their cars, and we've even gotten to know patients' dogs! In fact, our volunteers have noted that this model is actually more conducive to getting to know Food Farmacy patients, since their contact time is not spent waiting, picking out produce, or navigating through the site.

Food Farmacy does more than provide food, it helps connect people to other resources including a program guide, healthy recipes, connection to nutrition classes, immunizations, and other offers. In addition, we have hosted quarterly "open houses" where patients come in to pick their items, peruse a mini health fair full of resources including immunizations, and participate of cooking demos and tastings.



## Quality Improvement

- The Food Farmacy has grown exponentially since 2018. What started as a program serving just about 30 patients has ballooned into an endeavor that serves over 500 patients each year. Strategies for increasing efficiency and more accurate documentation are key to continuing this program into the future.
- In 2023, the Food Farmacy program underwent a revamp of its processes and eligibility criteria. To better serve our patients, our team partnered with the Community Health Community Health Worker team to address our growing waitlist. A process was designed to “triage” our referred patients to address the needs of the populations served. A script along with priority criteria was designed to better identify and address the needs of all patients referred. Three major priority eligibility criteria was identified: (1) food insecurity, (2) diet-related chronic disease diagnosis, (3) patient’s location and distance from sites. All patients were screened by a bilingual CHW who would offer alternative food resources if there was an immediate need.
- Our waitlist grows every week with the increase of participating clinics. This demonstrates Presbyterian's care teams commitment to screening and supporting patients and members. However, the challenge is the need is far greater than current capacity and funding. We incrementally increased patients served this year from 150 to 300. Moreover, we managed to maintain an attendance rate of over 75% for two years which is a product of our restructuring processes.

## Moving Forward

- In 2024, we will continue our QI process to address not only infrastructure of the program but also better use of the EHR (Epic) and more streamlined data collection and reporting processes. In addition, we will conduct QI project that will involve participant interviews and program feedback.
- Also in 2024, we will work to strengthen connection to Diabetes ReCHARGE and other chronic disease prevention & self-management programs and continue quality improvement.
- We are looking at ways to expand staff capacity and local food procurement as well as address gaps pertaining to serving locations and scaling up.
- Our reach will also expand other Food as Medicine models including produce prescription programs, and medically tailored food initiatives. Food as Medicine is an innovative framework that uses food-based interventions to help prevent, manage, and treat diet-related diseases. This strategy is widely supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention among other agencies.

***“If it weren’t for the wonderful Food Farmacy and the terrific people there it is hard for me to have fruit and veggies to make it through the week.”***

***“I love that I have experienced new food and I almost always find out how to cook healthy choices. Best prescription I ever received.”***

***“I wanted to say Thank You! Your caring, compassionate, kindness is so very much appreciated! Especially in these times. Your generosity does NOT go unrecognized.”***

This report was produced by Presbyterian Community Health. Questions? Contact Tatiana Falcón Rodríguez, MPH Last updated 1/12/2024