The Challenge for Low-Income San Franciscans

1 in 4 SF residents are food insecure!

Barriers to healthy diets:
• High cost of fruits & vegetables (23% higher than US ave.)
• Food deserts
• Many vulnerable SF residents ineligible for CalFresh

Dietary impacts:
• 44% of low-income SF residents report they cannot afford nutritious food
• Only 25% of children in SF eat 5+ servings of F&Vs daily
Food Insecure Patients Engage in Coping Strategies to Avoid Hunger that are Detrimental to Health

- Eat low-cost foods
- Eat highly filling foods
- Small variety of foods
- Avoid food waste
- Binge when food is available

- Higher risk of obesity, diabetes, & other chronic disease
- Once chronically ill, poorer ability to manage illness
Does Food Insecurity Impact Health?

COPING STRATEGIES:
- Dietary Quality
- Eating Behaviors
- Bandwidth

STRESS

FOOD INSECURITY

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

SPENDING TRADEOFFS

HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES

EMPLOYABILITY

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Adapted from Seligman and Schillinger, New England Journal of Medicine, 2010.
A SNAP Participant Incurs $1,400 Less for Health Care

Estimated annual per-person health care spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-income non-participant</th>
<th>SNAP participant</th>
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<td>$5,831</td>
<td>$4,421</td>
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Note: Health care spending includes out-of-pocket expenses and costs paid by private and public insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Admissions for Low Blood Sugar Increase by 27% in Last Week of the Month for Low-Income Population

Seligman HK et al. Health Aff 2014;33:116-123
Cost of A Health Care Visit for Low Blood Sugar vs. Food

- $17,564 INPATIENT ADMISSION
- $1,387 EMERGENCY VISIT
- $394 OUTPATIENT VISIT
- $657* MONTHLY FOOD COST (FAMILY OF 4)

*Thrifty Food Plan

American Journal of Managed Care, 2011.
$77.5 billion additional health care expenditures due to food insecurity
Problem...
A Solution: Vouchers 4 Veggies

Healthy Eating Voucher Program

Attributes: convenience, choice, health-focus, simplicity

Activates Healthy Eating Habits
“Triple Win”

- Develop Healthy Eating Habits
- Drive Supply of F&V in Underserved Neighborhoods
- Increase Food Security
How does V4V work?

1. **Distribution Sites:** Recruit, enroll, and follow participants

2. **Participants:** Pick up vouchers from their distribution site

3. **Vendor Network:** Participants redeem vouchers at an EatSF store

4. **Reimbursement System:** Vendor sends voucher to EatSF for reimbursement

5. **Payment:** Vendor receives a check from EatSF PLUS an extra $0.25 convenience fee
Proven Results

- Develop Healthy Eating Habits
  - Participants increased F&V intake by 1 daily serving
  - 91% report positive dietary changes

- Drive Supply of F&V in Underserved Neighborhoods
  - Stores report increased produce sales & re-stocking
  - Millions of dollars of economic impact

- Increase Food Security
  - More than 1 in 3 increase their food security status
Proven Results

Participants increase F&V intake by over 1 daily serving – enough for immediate health impacts

Over 91% of participants report positive dietary changes
Improved Food Security

• 39% report improved food security status.

• 28% report extended monthly food budgets by at least 1 week.
Long-Term Positive Dietary Changes

After 6 – 12 months post program (no longer receiving vouchers):

- 83% of participants report positive dietary change as a result of the program including eating less junk food and eating more fruits and vegetables.

- 53% maintain the same level of F&V consumption as in the program despite no longer receiving vouchers.

- 94% report they are more confident buying healthy food on a budget and report improved health as a result of the program.

_Diet is the cornerstone of care for most common chronic disease_
Who are V4V participants?

*Designed to reach vulnerable populations*

- People living with diet-sensitive chronic diseases
- SSI/SSDI recipients
- Pregnant women receiving services at WIC clinics
- All participants are low-income and food insecure (most very food insecure)
Impact

- Served **11,000+** individuals
- **70+** community distribution sites
- Vendor network of **30+** stores
- Infused **$1.5M+** in F&V purchases into underserved neighborhoods
- Supports local healthy food vendors and Healthy Retail SF efforts
- Successful implementation in Los Angeles, CA
Other Attributes

Rigorously Tested Model
- Robust multi-modal evaluation
- large sample size with diverse populations in multiple locations

Innovative Design based on
- Behavioral economics
- Human Centered Design
- Evidence –based health Research

High Satisfaction & Demand for Program
- 90%+ participant satisfaction rates
- 85% retention rate
- 77% voucher redemption rate
- 6,000+ household waitlist in San Francisco

High Satisfaction Among Food Retailers
- 100% believe V4V is a good resource for the community
- 89% report selling more fruits and vegetables
- 88% report seeing new and more repeat customers
- 72% report increased profit
- One out of two stores increased produce restocking
What Works

- **Flexible**: integrates into each site’s unique work flow and designed to meet specific patient needs

- **Complimentary**: especially effective when combined with health and wellness/nutrition components

- **In-hand**: no secondary referral

- **Simple and direct**: easy to understand & follow-through

- **Acts as an incentive**: engages patients in programming
Patient-Centered

- **Easy**: enrollment process allows for quick adoption and engagement
- **Culturally sensitive**: materials translated into multiple languages (5+)
- **Wellness focus (not charity)**: conveys health and wellness (with colorful, upbeat branding); reduces stigma
Lessons Learned

- **Organizational support**: have an internal champion or designated staff supported by leadership; turn-over can be an issue (but not always)

- Quick but still adds to workload – great for nutritionists, health workers, social workers (not ZERO time environments)

- Minimum **6-months** for habit forming; food security requires longer-term investment

- Off-rolling resources
What Participants Say

“EatSF has helped me balance my health. I am eating healthier and changing my eating habits.”

“Since we, we’ve been doing this healthy eating and stuff, I was taking 9 to 10 medications a day? Now I’m down to 6!... And my blood pressure is normal.”

“This program really help me with my children to show them a healthier way to eat.”
Summary

Vouchers 4 Veggies is an effective healthy eating program that is easily implemented and saves health care costs while increasing patient satisfaction.

We are currently serving San Francisco, Los Angeles and soon to be in Colorado.
Implementation

• Enrollment slots
• Training
• Enrollment + Survey
• Nutrition information
• Voucher accountability
• Other
Thank You!