



American Hospital  
Association™

*Advancing Health in America*

# HOSPITALS LEADING THE WAY TO A HEALTHIER AMERICA





# Healthier Communities

Hospitals have always been at the heart of community health empowering healthier, happier lives for all. Now, more than ever, hospitals provide free preventive care, education and resources to help people stay healthy. Hospitals regularly support and foster health in three key ways:

## 1. PRIORITIZING FOOD & NUTRITION

Three out of four hospitals offer nutrition programs to help their communities build healthier lives by tackling food and diet-related health challenges.



**OHIO**

Food for Life



**OKLAHOMA**

Culinary Medicine



**PENNSYLVANIA**

Corner Cabinet Food Pantry

## 2. PREVENTING & MANAGING CHRONIC DISEASE

Most hospitals offer free health screenings and health education, empowering people to catch health issues early, take charge of their well-being and prevent complex or long-term conditions.



**KENTUCKY**

Colon Cancer Screenings



**MONTANA**

Free Nicotine Cessation



**INDIANA**

Health Screenings at Barber Shops

## 3. PROMOTING WELLNESS

Healthy behaviors lessen your risk for stroke, diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers and depression. Hospitals are helping people make healthy lifestyle choices every day.



**NEBRASKA**

Free Clinic



**NORTH CAROLINA**

Mental Health on Wheels



**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Balance Classes that Prevent Common Falls

**Focused on community needs and collaboration, hospitals are empowering people to lead healthier lives and thrive.**





# Prioritizing Food & Nutrition

## MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital

Baltimore, Md.

MedStar Health, in partnership with organizations like the Maryland Food Bank and Hungry Harvest, runs Food Rx—an evidence-based, medically tailored food program for patients with chronic illnesses and/or food insecurity. By addressing nutrition as a core component of disease management, the program helps patients with conditions like diabetes and heart failure avoid complications and readmissions. Through the Collaborative Care Program, participants receive weekly produce deliveries (10–22 pounds), pantry access and nutrition education. **Since launch, over 150 patients have enrolled, 10,000+ pounds of food distributed, and more than 25 educational sessions delivered.**

## University Health

Kansas City, Mo.

FoodFARMacy is a free initiative addressing food insecurity and chronic disease in underserved Missouri communities. University Health, in partnership with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and six other partner sites, use a “food as medicine” model to deliver biweekly produce bags and nutrition education to those managing diabetes, hypertension and related conditions. **Preliminary findings indicate that participants increased fruit and vegetable intake from one to two servings to three to four daily; stage 1 hypertension dropped from 74% to 37% and diabetic-range blood glucose fell from 38% to 11%.** Combined with the Healthy Harvest Mobile Market — serving over 245,000 people since 2020 by bringing fresh produce and nutrition education to food deserts — these programs are transforming health through food access and care.

## Augusta Health

Fishersville, Va.

Augusta Health partners with the AMI Farm, harvesting over 151,000 pounds of organic produce each year to nourish patients and support wellness through several programs. **The Food FARMacy program provides 16 weeks of fresh vegetables, recipes and nutrition education to patients managing chronic disease — serving over 140 participants with 21,000 pounds of produce.** Home health and hospice nurses deliver **biweekly produce bags to patients’ doorsteps, totaling more than 2,000 bags** to date. Meanwhile, the **Augusta Health Food Pantry has supplied 2,553 pounds of produce to more than 900 patients**, ensuring healthy food is part of healing.

## Avera Health

Sioux Falls, S.D.

Food as Medicine is a produce prescription program that tackles food insecurity while boosting fruit and vegetable intake to improve health. The program studies the impact of fresh produce on chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and obesity by removing financial and access barriers to healthy eating. **The program has served over 350 participants and families by providing in-store produce vouchers or weekly fresh produce box delivery for six months.**



# Preventing & Managing Chronic Disease

## Inova

Falls Church, Va.

Life with Cancer offers free, comprehensive support to anyone impacted by cancer, regardless of where they receive treatment. Services include oncology nurse navigation, counseling, disease-specific support groups, fitness and wellness classes and education on topics like nutrition, stress and treatment. In 2023, **the program delivered more than 2,100 classes, educational groups, and wellness programs; provided 32,000 education and counseling consults; and served over 61,000 individuals.** With offerings from pediatric support to grief care, acupuncture and oncology massage, Life with Cancer ensures no one has to face cancer alone — emotionally, physically or mentally.

## St. Tammany Health System

Convington, La.

The Transitions of Care Team Program launched in May 2023 to support patients with **chronic congestive heart failure**, a long-term condition that requires continuous management. The program provides in-home visits from care providers who educate patients on dietary changes, lifestyle modifications, and symptom monitoring. Education is the program's most effective intervention, enabling patients to prevent complications before they escalate. Patients also receive a symptom-tracking refrigerator magnet, funded by the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation, to help manage their condition and reduce avoidable hospitalizations. **The program has decreased average monthly hospital readmissions for congestive heart failure.** In the program's first six months, emergency CHF admissions dropped **from nine to 1.75.**



# Promoting Wellness

## Meritus Health

Hagerstown, Md.

The Meritus Health Care Callers program addresses the serious health risks of loneliness and social isolation — factors shown to impact life expectancy as much as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity. Launched in November 2021, the program connects 81 volunteers and two staff members with 350 patients who self-identify as lonely. Each week, callers engage patients in 15- to 30-minute conversations. **To date, more than 700 patients have participated. In fiscal year 2024 alone, the program logged 185,915 minutes of conversation. After four months, 95% of participants report feeling less lonely.**

## Miners' Colfax Medical Center

Raton, N.M.

The Miners' Outreach Program provides free, comprehensive health screenings and education to current and former miners across New Mexico. Born from legislation to support those affected by black lung disease, the program has grown into a trusted provider of care for occupational illnesses. Using a specialized mobile medical unit, the program reaches communities statewide with services including hearing and breathing tests, chest x-rays, oximetry, health education, benefit counseling, and follow-up care. In partnership with federal support, the Outreach Program ensures miners receive early diagnosis, vital health resources, and access to care — no matter where they live or work.