



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 Life¹



OKLAHOMA

Culinary Medicine²



PENNSYLVANIA

Corner Cabinet Food Pantry³

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 Screenings⁴



MONTANA

Free Nicotine Cessation⁵



INDIANA

Health Screenings at Barber Shops⁶

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 Clinic⁷



NORTH CAROLINA

Mental Health on Wheels⁸



SOUTH DAKOTA

Balance Classes that Prevent Common Falls⁹

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



Hospital Programs Across the U.S.

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 has harvested over 151,000 pounds of organic produce since 2018 to nourish patients and promote wellness. **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 over 2,553 pounds of produce to more than 900 patients,** ensuring that healthy food is part of the healing process.

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.**

Corewell Health

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Corewell Health improves access to nutritious food through programs tailored to Michigan communities. Centered: Cooking for Better Health **helps Southwest Michigan residents manage hypertension with hands-on, low-salt, plant-based cooking lessons.** Eighty percent report better understanding nutrition's role in managing their condition. In West Michigan, **Corewell helps five food pantries expand access to healthy food.** A registered dietitian supports these efforts through education and policy. **Another program brings pregnant women nutrition education and health food via home visits.** At Pennock Hospital, **food-insecure patients are connected to the Fresh Food Initiative and supported by a community health worker** to access healthy groceries.

Inova Health System

Falls Church, Va.

Inova Peterson 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 fiscal year 2024, **the program delivered more than 2,500 classes, educational groups, and wellness programs; provided 41,000 education and counseling consults; and served over 70,000 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.

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.**

References

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8. NORTH CAROLINA: Mental Health on Wheels, <https://www.med.unc.edu/psych/cecmh/services/clinical-services/wellness-on-wheels>
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