

Improving Fresh Produce Access: AMA's Efforts to Launch the Northside Produce Prescription Program

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, UNITED STATES, March 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- According to the CDC's Understanding Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Produce Rx programs are an innovative healthcare initiative that allows providers to prescribe fruits and vegetables to patients—particularly those with chronic diseases who face barriers to accessing nutritious food. These programs aim to improve health outcomes, lower medical costs, and increase patient engagement by integrating nutrition support into healthcare settings or connecting patients with community resources.

As part of this initiative, voucher incentive programs play a key role in making fresh produce more accessible. These programs provide consumers with coupons or financial incentives to use at the point of purchase. Vouchers can take various forms, including paper or wooden tokens, electronic loyalty cards, or debit-style cards. They can be redeemed at participating locations such as farmers' markets, grocery stores (both physical and online), mobile markets, and even select food pantries.



Northside Produce Rx Program in

Planning

Funded by CDC's REACH program, Asian Media Access (AMA) is currently in the planning stage of launching a Northside Produce Prescription program and is actively gathering community input to ensure its success. To ensure these initiatives are effective and culturally responsive, AMA has established an Advisory Committee composed of local leaders, healthcare organizations, and community advocates. This committee plays a crucial role in assessing community needs, identifying barriers, and shaping strategies for implementation. Key members include Asian Media Access, Hawthorne Neighborhood Council, Hue-Man and Partners in Prevention Clinic, Minneapolis Food Access Coalition/Project Sweetie Pie, Minneapolis/St. Paul and National NAACP Representatives, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, Neighborhood HealthSource, Rochester Clinic, and the University of Minnesota. By collaborating with these partners, AMA aims to strengthen the impact of programs and improve access to nutritious food for those in need.

Unlocking Healthier Lifestyles: Insights from AMA's Nutrition Fair Survey

One of the key efforts in this process was the Cultural Diet & Nutrition Fair, hosted at the University of Minnesota's Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center. A crucial component of the event was a survey designed to assess current fruit and vegetable consumption habits, awareness of the Produce Rx program, and preferences for delivery systems. More than 75 community members participated, providing valuable insights that will shape the development of culturally responsive solutions. The findings will help AMA and its partners design strategies to improve fresh produce access and promote healthier lifestyles within diverse communities.

Survey Results Reveal Community Preferences and Needs

The survey results highlight key trends in community fruit and vegetable consumption, awareness of the Produce Prescription program, and preferred methods for accessing fresh produce. While 30.4% of participants reported consuming three servings of vegetables daily, a significant portion—15.2%—consume only one serving, indicating a need for greater dietary support. Fruit intake also varied, with 20.3% consuming one serving per day and 19% consuming four servings. Additionally, awareness of the Produce Prescription program remains low, with 74.7% of participants unfamiliar with the concept, emphasizing the need for targeted outreach and education. When asked about preferred ways to access fresh produce, 70.8% favored using vouchers at grocery stores or farmers' markets, while 54.2% were interested in ordering online with free delivery. Other popular options included weekly clinic pick-ups with health check-ups and home-delivered Fresh Produce Boxes. These findings underscore the importance of providing flexible, accessible, and culturally relevant solutions to improve fresh food access and support healthier eating habits in the community.

In summary, AMA's Northside Produce Rx Program aims to improve community access to fresh produce and promote healthier lifestyles through the integration of nutrition support in healthcare. By collaborating with local organizations and gathering valuable community insights, AMA is taking key steps toward addressing dietary gaps and raising awareness about the Produce Prescription program. For those interested in learning more about the program and

how it can impact the community, please visit the Asian Media Access website at <https://ww1.amamedia.org/> or <https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/>.

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