



Q&A FROM THE 'HEALTHCARE'S ROLE IN FEEDING HUNGRY CHILDREN DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY' SESSION

2020 Rural Child Hunger Summit

- 1. For homebound individuals, how are they receiving food through any of your programs?**
 - Our regional Medicaid organizations have \$\$ for social needs. We are encouraging them to cover commercial delivery costs or are assisting them to set up their own system.
 - Pantries are recruiting new young & healthy drivers
 - We've streamlined the 3rd party pick-up authorization process for our pantries (Lynn Knox)
 - To address the current needs of our populations, we have assigned additional staff members to our three food pantry locations. These staff are assigned to help with food deliveries to the pantry, fill emergency food box orders, and deliver (without contact) to the member. We also engage our Community Health Assistants (CHA's) to help deliver food boxes during their home visits (Maria Welch - Geisinger)

- 2. How will your organizations handle huge demand given the economic impact of COVID over the next few months?**
 - Major fundraising campaign underway
 - Broad communication that federal resources not available until July at the earliest & then somewhat a mismatch for the need
 - We have a significant fiscal ask for our state legislature in coalition with others, unfortunately their dysfunction means they may not meet until late May with funding available around July (Lynn Knox)
 - We have teams who are closely monitoring the daily and weekly food box totals. We are also working closely with our partners at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and the CEO of Weinberg Regional Food Bank to ensure resources are allocated appropriately. If demand increases, additional staff will be deployed to assist with the packaging and delivery of the food boxes. Teams are also working to connect patients and members, as well as train staff, to utilize online program directories to connect patients and members to social needs. At Geisinger, our platform, called Neighborly (powered by Aunt Bertha), is focused on connecting those to social resources responsive to COVID-19. Early data shows that the most searched needs are those related to food resources. Teams are focusing on identifying additional resources to add to the database to help connect those in need with additional resources in their area. (Maria Welch - Geisinger)



- 3. How can other cities/ CBOs work with restaurants re: surplus food best practices?**
 - Start with existing relationships with community partners, food suppliers, or food banks. Ask to see if there is anyone they can recommend as a partner. If your organization has an existing relationship or uses a food supplier, see if they have any connections. At the Fresh Food Farmacy, about 20% of our food is sourced from wholesale distributors. These same wholesale options service our hospital food services. It was through that relationship, we were able to connect to purchase food that was slated for restaurants that they no longer needed/were able to purchase (Maria Welch - Geisinger)

- 4. As you are rethinking all your programs, as we all are, how are you using technology to support educational program delivery, that often comes with food delivery?**
 - Developing video chat version of cooking and gardening workshops or on-going support groups (Lynn Knox)

- 5. Question for Maria: Where do the funds come from to purchase food from food suppliers to restaurants?**
 - Currently, the Fresh Food Farmacy is supported through grants, donations, philanthropy and in-kind donations. We fill out pantries with healthy food options and focus on fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and low-fat dairy options. We have a partnership with the same food supplier at our local hospitals (Maria Welch - Geisinger)

- 6. What, if any, additional action at the federal level would help your patients most right now? In the next stimulus package, USDA action, etc. (boosting the SNAP benefits, increased Medicaid funding to states, etc.)**
 - Flexible cash! We will have more than enough TEFAP product, we need items, supplies, vehicle rental, fuel, salaries for extra workers... (Lynn Knox)

- 7. In addition to not shopping on the 1st through the 3rd of the month, what other actions can we take to help alleviate the COVID-19 burden on low-income community members?**
 - Advocate for supportive local & state measures; rent waivers, eviction prevention, health benefits for uninsured
 - Pressure Medicaid & Medicare to see food as medicine now more than ever (Lynn Knox)
 - It can also be helpful to provide resources or a directory to connect individuals to local social service organizations that have capacity. Changes are occurring rapidly and new sources that can provide help are starting, while others are changing. Being able to provide current and accurate information to both your community and staff is needed. Currently, food resources and housing needs are some of the most urgent and commonly searched resources during this uncertain time (Maria Welch - Geisinger).