

OLE Health

NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

ADDRESSING DIVERSE PATIENT GROUPS THROUGH CENTER MARKETS, COMMUNITY GARDENS, CAMP COOKS AND COMBINED AREA RESOURCES

OLE Health has a long history of serving agricultural workers in Napa Valley. Ongoing work includes meal planning with cooks at farmworker housing sites, offering a monthly fresh food market, growing community gardens, accessing area resources and surveying all patients for food insecurity.

Most health center staff recognize that their patients face barriers to care, but the extent of the problems becomes clearer after asking a few simple questions. That's what OLE Health learned when they surveyed about food security challenges faced by their community.

Using a validated food security instrument (see

Getting Started with your Own Food Insecurity Program, p. 48), patients were asked if they were worried their food would run out before they had money to buy more, and if they actually had run out of food for a period of time. An overwhelming 84% of patients responded that they faced these situations in the previous 12 months. The same number desired more resources to help them acquire food.

OLE Health responded. Every third Friday of the month patient services staff host a free fruit and vegetable market at center sites. The market is a festive occasion, used also as an outreach and health screening event. There they feed about 180-200 people per month. Screenings are repeated at each market to track current

needs. No identification card is required at the market, which increases access for patients often facing barriers as immigrants.

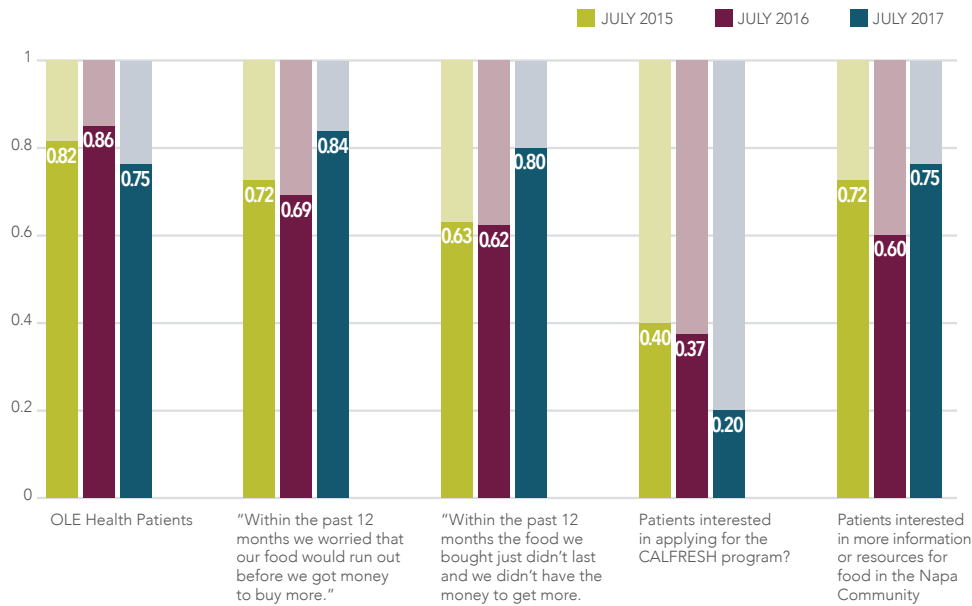
A monthly calendar of food resources is distributed, showing where and when things like hot meals are available and what one needs to qualify. Patients are diverse, with the elderly, homeless, farmworkers, HIV infected, chronically ill and children identified with food insecurity.

Staff said they don't identify needs if they aren't committed to responding to them. Social determinants of health are increasingly collected around the country, but OLE Health is concerned any data collected that identifies problems should be acted upon. One surprise for staff was how many resources were actually available in the community. The efforts to provide resources resulted in stronger collaborations between the center and a number of outside organizations. The Food Bank donates food for the market, medical residents from Kaiser Permanente teach about healthy food options and volunteers from the community assist with the food distribution.

Plans for the future include building a teaching kitchen in a new clinic site, gathering needs from patient-centered focus groups and expanding community gardens.

FOOD INSECURITY SURVEY RESULTS

July 2015–July 2017



TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE OF FARMWORKER FOOD OPTIONS

Despite working in the fields from sunrise to dusk, agricultural workers are often trapped in their own food deserts. Seasonal workers may live in rural locales without access to markets selling fresh food. Migrant workers face greater barriers, including unfamiliarity with local resources, inadequate transportation, uncertain migration plans and housing that is often unsafe and without kitchen access. Groups of farmworkers still depend on shared housing with cooks who supply all the food and meals.

OLE Health is working with three farmworker housing sites serving about 180 men. They are coordinating meal plans with cooks, facilitating community gardens and inviting the farmworkers to participate in all food security efforts.

Health screenings done at the housing sites showed many problems associated with poor diets. Having the survey data allowed the center to collaborate with cooks and housing staff to improve well-being in a collaborative fashion. Farmworkers now have the self-management skills to continue this change as they migrate.

INTERVENTIONS

WORKING WITH THREE FARMWORKER HOUSING SITES TO SERVE MORE HEALTHFUL MEAL PLANS

CREATION OF A FOOD SECURITY SCREENING TOOL WITH TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

MONTHLY FREE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A LOCAL FOOD BANK

NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH KAISER PERMANENTE FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

FUTURE HOPES FOR A TEACHING KITCHEN AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

PARTNERS

CALFRESH

CENTER FOR VOLUNTEER AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

KAISER PERMANENTE

MEALS ON WHEELS

NAPA VALLEY FOOD BANK

THE TABLE