**Introduction**

The Farm to Health Initiative is a partnership between Family Health Center of Worcester and Community Harvest Project to improve consumption of healthy foods among food insecure populations to eventually improve the population’s health. The initiative includes education, consistent seasonal distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables, and evaluation of participants before and after the program to assess impact.

This program was initiated in 2013 to fill a gap in produce consumption in food insecure populations despite increasing contributions from current USDA benefits including SNAP, WIC, School Lunch, and Summer Meal Programs.

“Massachusetts: 11.4 percent of households are considered to be food insecure, or having limited access to adequate and safe foods. Worcester County, 10.9 percent of households are identified as being food insecure.

Family Health Center of Worcester: up to 67 percent of patients do not have access to fresh fruit and vegetables, primarily because of cost.”

**Research Methods**

In collaboration with Community Harvest Project, WFHC recruited twenty-three food insecure patients to receive weekly produce servings from the month of July to September. Surveys prior to and after distribution period of seasonal produce were carried out to examine questions displayed below:

- **Quality of Produce Consumed**
- **Quantity of Produce Consumed**
- **Dollar Amount Spent on Produce**
- **Amount of Distribution Consumed**

The goal of the distribution is to provide easy access to fresh produce to the food insecure population in Worcester. Results of a weekly survey given out to those using the program would help us verify that our program is having a positive impact on this group and may enable us to increase support and funding for this program. Shown below (Figure 14) is participant feedback regarding factors that would better incentivize produce consumption.

**Demographics**

![Figure 3: Research questions and hypotheses flow chart](image)

**Benefits**

- **Wanted more Produce**
- **Enjoyed the Food Quality**
- **Would Buy & Eat Again**
- **Would Recommend**

**Future Direction**

In order to obtain results that better show changes in vegetable consumption over the course of the produce distribution we have developed a new survey (Figure 15) that focuses on:

- Quality of Produce Consumed
- Quantity of Produce Consumed
- Dollar Amount Spent on Produce
- Amount of Distribution Consumed

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**References**


**Case Study**

**Figure 1**: USDA Programs aimed to End Childhood Hunger

**Figure 2**: Community Harvest Project 2012 Impact Sheet

Community Harvest Project grows fresh produce on nearby farms in Grafton and Harvard, MA. These crops are then harvested in the Fall by an indispensable volunteer force. Fresh fruits and vegetables are then donated to the Worcester County Food Bank, which distributes to many local food pantries.

**Figure 3**: Produce Consumption Pre & Post Distribution

**Figure 4**: Participant Age Distribution

**Figure 5**: Participant Race Distribution

**Figure 6**: Participant Household Size

**Figure 7**: Change in Participant Government Benefits Post Distribution

**Figure 8**: Change in Participant Government Benefits Post Distribution

**Figure 9**: Distribution Feedback

**Figure 10**: Distribution Quality

**Figure 11**: Distribution Consumption/Preference

**Figure 12**: Distribution Recommendation

**Figure 13**: Distribution Response/Innovation

**Figure 14**: Factors that make eating produce easier

**Figure 15**: New Survey to Analyze Next Year’s Distribution