



Grants to Community Health Centers Support Mississippians Who Lack Food

Direct Relief and CHCAMS partnership provides resources to address food insecurity

Community Health Centers are a lifeline for many to primary health care to manage diseases and remain healthy. Fueling the human body with the proper nutrition is key to health. Healthy food is the fuel. In a state ranked 49th in food access, many Mississippians face hardships in simply obtaining food. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem and the hunger for many people.

The Community Health Center Association of Mississippi, in partnership with Direct Relief, is supporting health centers in identifying and addressing food insecurity and creating more access to food.

1 in 5 people

struggles with hunger.



1 in 4
children
struggles with hunger.

Mississippi 2020
Source: Feeding America, 2021

The Grantees

ACCESS Family Health Services will use the grant to expand its Food4Fit program. Activities include screening patients for food insecurity, developing partnerships, and forging new partnerships to increase access to healthy food and healthy lifestyles.

Central Mississippi Health Services will increase efforts to identify families in jeopardy of food insecurity through student ambassadors and health care professionals.

Coastal Family Health Center will leverage established partnerships and resources to implement a food distribution network among its clinical and outreach locations.

Delta Health Center will provide nutritional information and education related to chronic health issues such as diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or other dietary-related health condition, and will provide food vouchers to increase patients' ability to make better dietary choices.



G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center will identify patients who have both chronic disease and potential food insecurity. Staff will build on current food insecurity screenings by referrals to local and state programs and provide interventions to educate patients on nutrition concepts.

MississippiCare will work with the local food pantry and extension services to offer the Cooking Matters curriculum to patients, along with food vouchers. A registered dietitian will also provide herb gardening instructions and lessons on using herbs.

The History and Continuing Need

Better access to food increases human health. Community Health Centers in the U.S. have always understood this link. In the 1960s, the patients at the first community health center located in Mound Bayou, Miss. suffered from malnutrition. The doctor wrote prescriptions for food as the treatment. Community-based farming efforts and the establishment of federal social programs have helped alleviate hunger and kept Americans fed.

Today, community health centers in Mississippi address persistent food insecurity by connecting patients to food through organizational partnerships. Those health centers include **Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center**, **Greater Meridian Health Clinic**, and **Jefferson Comprehensive Health Center**.