Nourishing minds & communities

Wellness on Wheels

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT
WE ARE WHAT WE EAT!

What we eat, what we earn, and where we live and work are all factors in our health. Researchers now know that social and environmental factors contribute greatly to wellness. RWJBarnabas Health recognizes that in order to truly improve the health of its patients and the communities in which they live, it needs to actively address all of the factors that affect health. With that in mind, the Social Impact and Community Investment (SICI) Department at RWJBarnabas Health was created to improve the health of New Jersey residents by addressing key issues such as nutrition, housing, workforce and education.

One key issue that the SICI practice addresses is food insecurity. We all know that the choices we make about which foods to eat and how those foods are prepared can either prevent or exacerbate illness. But what about those without adequate resources to afford healthier options or those who reside in areas impacted by systemic issues which create food deserts?

- Are people eating the right foods? Can families still enjoy their traditional family and culturally rich foods made with a healthier twist? Do they know whether this is possible?
- Does everyone have equal access to fresh, nutritious and affordable healthy options?
- Do our local grocery stores, convenience stores, and bodegas carry fresh fruits and vegetables? And are they affordable?

Wellness on Wheels was created to work within our communities to both answer these questions and serve as an vital resource.

ABOUT WELLNESS ON WHEELS

Wellness on Wheels (WOW) is a greenhouse and cooking school on wheels! It brings free demonstrations and nutrition education right into local neighborhoods. WOW is custom-designed to work with schools, senior homes, houses of worship, health care providers and community-based organizations to reach families and communities, emphasizing the value of good nutrition. Some of the key topics covered include:

- Healthy food preparation and storage
- The importance of a healthy diet and the link to health
- How to make healthier food choices in a fast food environment

In addition to providing education, WOW will deliver fresh fruits and vegetables grown from RWJBarnabas Health greenhouses, local gardens, and farms directly into the community. Finally, multi-disciplinary professionals and paraprofessionals will volunteer their time to offer health screening to community members.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT FROM WOW

If you would like to learn more about how WOW can become an integral component of your educational efforts, please contact the Social Impact Lead listed below. WOW is designed to supplement existing efforts that help to achieve healthy communities.

Jaime L. Pula: JPula@medprowellness.com
Diana Bellamy: diana.bellamy@rwjbh.org
FACTS: HUNGER IN NEW JERSEY

• **1 in 10** New Jerseyans do not know where their next meal is coming from.
  – 1/3 of these individuals make too much $ to qualify for SNAP or food assistance. These individuals are often referred to as **ALICE** (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and represent the growing number of individuals and families who work but are unable to afford the basic necessities of housing, food, child care, health care and transportation. RWJBH aims to create policies that acknowledge the plight of ALICE.

• **298,000** children in the Garden State go to bed hungry.

• **200,000** older adults are without enough to eat.

• **1 in 5** Community College students are hungry.

• **740,600** New Jerseyans are on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and receive an average of $142 per month to feed their families.
  – **1 in 15** New Jersey workers benefit from SNAP. These individuals are our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends—many of whom we interact with daily and do not recognize that they need additional support. They are ALICE.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO EAT, THEY:

• **Are not as healthy.** Some chronic diseases that are linked to food insecurity are diabetes, asthma, heart disease, obesity and depression.

• **Have poor educational outcomes.** Children who do NOT have access to proper nutrition are less likely to graduate, have poor school attendance and do not perform as well in math and reading.

---

ABOUT OUR PARTNERS

Providing treatment and services to over five million patients each year, **RWJBarnabas Health** is the largest and most comprehensive health care system in the state of New Jersey. It combines the best of academic medicine, research and teaching, and community partners together to create healthier communities. In 2017, RWJBH made a significant decision to further extend its commitment to foster the development of healthier communities by addressing the social issues that affect health outcomes, such as food insecurity, housing, and education. To this end, the Social Impact and Community Investment (SICI) Department was launched. Wellness on Wheels is one SICI initiative designed to address food insecurity, promote nutrition education, improve access to fresh produce, and highlight partnerships with local resources. Partners include:

**MedPro Wellness** is a results-driven organization that provides comprehensive nutrition, exercise and stress management programs with an emphasis on positive behavioral change. Through innovative wellness programs and an award-winning technology, their team helps any participant achieve medically-relevant results. Their mission is to achieve measurable improvements in health by combining the resources of physicians, fitness centers, health care systems and insurance providers to connect participants with the appropriate programming to reverse or prevent the effects of chronic conditions and promote a healthier lifestyle.

**Rutgers New Jersey Medical School’s** (NJMS) mission is to educate students, physicians, and scientists to meet society’s current and future health care needs through patient-centered education; pioneering research; innovative clinical, rehabilitative and preventive care; and collaborative community outreach. NJMS will partner with the Wellness on Wheels effort to serve as a vehicle to provide experiential learning opportunities for their students.

**Ecomedia**’s vision is to harness the power of advertising and channel it into tangible social change. EcoMedia leverages corporate advertising dollars to support the work of the nation’s most effective nonprofits. Through the company’s innovative EcoAd®, EducationAd™, and WellnessAd™ programs, advertisers direct a portion of their radio, television, and digital ad-sPENDs to fund critical veterans’, education, health and wellness, and environmental projects nationwide. EcoMedia has delivered more than $85 million in funding and resources to crucial nonprofit organizations, improving the quality of life for more than 36 million Americans to date.

**OUR COMMITMENT TO LOCAL VENDORS**

RWJBarnabas Health commits to Buy Local, Hire Local, Invest Local. To propel this commitment, Wellness on Wheels will feature local farmers and diverse businesses at community events that share our commitment to promoting healthy eating and lifestyle practices.
IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR USE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- **The Importance of Good Nutrition**
  - Growing Up Healthy: The Importance of Starting Good Nutrition Early: [https://familydoctor.org/growing-healthy-importance-starting-good-nutrition-early/](https://familydoctor.org/growing-healthy-importance-starting-good-nutrition-early/)
  - Healthy Eating: [https://familydoctor.org/growing-healthy-importance-starting-good-nutrition-early/](https://familydoctor.org/growing-healthy-importance-starting-good-nutrition-early/)

- **State & Local Resources**
  - New Jersey Department of Human Services: [https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/programs/njsnap/apply/](https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/programs/njsnap/apply/)

- **Helpful Articles & Reference Materials**

- **FOR ADDITIONAL PROVIDER RESOURCES VISIT:**
  - Addressing Food Insecurity: A Toolkit for Pediatricians: [http://www.frac.org/aaptoolkit](http://www.frac.org/aaptoolkit)
  - Identifying Food Insecurity in Healthcare Settings: A Review of the Evidence: [https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/sites/sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/files/SIREN_FoodInsecurity_Brief.pdf](https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/sites/sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/files/SIREN_FoodInsecurity_Brief.pdf)

- **Materials for Hosting a WOW Event**
  - Brochure and Flyer Templates
  - Poster
Nourishing minds & communities

Wellness on Wheels

CHECK US OUT!

Check out our Community Tool Kit, where you can find more information about Wellness on Wheels, hunger in New Jersey and valuable resources for your community!

www.RWJBH.org/WellnessWheels