

# Participants In Abbott's Food As Medicine Program Showed Clinically Significant Improvements In Managing Diabetes

- Study by Public Health Institute shows people with diabetes were able to lower A1C levels, better self-manage diabetes, and improve overall diet and food security at 12 months
- Abbott's Healthy Food Rx program provides home-delivered healthy food boxes to help address diabetes; part of broader collaboration to address social barriers and expand access to health in Stockton, Calif.

ABBOTT PARK, Ill. and OAKLAND, Calif., Nov. 8, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- A study of Abbott's (NYSE: ABT) Healthy Food Rx, a food as medicine program that provides home-delivered medical prescriptions of healthy food to help address diabetes, showed clinically important benefits for people with diabetes. The real-world study, which was conducted by the Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness and Nutrition (PHI CWN) in an active community clinic over a 12-month period, found that Healthy Food Rx participants had lower A1C levels, improved diabetes self-management, and improved overall diet quality and food security.

In 2021, Abbott and its foundation the Abbott Fund launched the Healthy Food Rx program in Stockton, Calif., where 60% of the population has diabetes or prediabetes. The program, part of the company's broader *Future Well™* Communities initiative, brings together Stockton-based organizations to help individuals living with diabetes by delivering free recipe-based food boxes to approximately 450 participants' homes and providing hands-on education about managing their diabetes through nutrition. PHI CWN's study showed the following results after 12 months:

- **Decreased A1C levels:** A1C is a test that reflects average glucose levels for the past three months. Higher A1C levels, a sign of uncontrolled diabetes, lead to higher risk for diabetes-related complications including cardiovascular disease, blindness or limb amputation. During this study, participants with uncontrolled diabetes (baseline A1C values greater than 7.0%) saw their A1C levels decrease by 0.80%, on average (from 9.73% to 8.93%,  $p = 0.003$ ). This average decrease for the group exceeds the widely accepted 0.5% benchmark that is considered a clinically significant change and is associated with improved health outcomes in people with diabetes.
- **Improved diabetes self-management:** The number of participants who rated their ability to self-manage their diabetes grew significantly through the program ( $p < 0.05$ ): 88% of participants reported they follow their meal plan (compared to 58% before enrolling in Healthy Food Rx); 78% reported more physical activity (compared to 61%); and 43% now talk with mentors and friends about diabetes management and healthy living (compared to 12%), all consistent with empowerment of people living with diabetes.
- **Improved diet quality:** Participants' average fruit and vegetable consumption increased significantly. Fruit intake increased by 0.28 times per day, which equals almost two more servings per week; and vegetable intake increased by 0.14 times per day, which equals one more serving per week ( $p = 0.001$  and  $0.028$ , respectively).
- **Improved food security:** At the start of the program, 34% of participants were food secure. During the program, food security increased significantly to 44% ( $p = 0.018$ ).

Healthy Food Rx is one of the largest food as medicine programs for people with diabetes in the country, having reached more than 450 participants to date. Based on initial results, Abbott and the Abbott Fund are working with partners to expand the program, targeting an additional 1,000 people by the end of the year.

"The future of Stockton depends on the health and well-being of the people who live here, and that's why it's so exciting to see the Healthy Food Rx program improving the health of our residents with diabetes," said Kevin Lincoln, Mayor of Stockton.

"Change happens through genuine partnership. I'd like to congratulate and thank our local Stockton organizations, Community Medical Centers and the Emergency Food Bank, along with Abbott and PHI, for demonstrating the importance of listening, collaboration and building new solutions to tackle the challenges of diabetes."

"Healthy Food Rx is a strong example of how working side-by-side with communities can break down barriers and help people live healthier," said Melissa Brotz, president of the Abbott Fund and vice president of Global Marketing and External Affairs at Abbott. "We know that Healthy Food Rx is making a meaningful difference for people with diabetes, and we're also reaching their families with nutritious meals and discussions on healthy eating. We look forward to sharing our learnings and growing our impact."

"Chronic conditions like diabetes are growing, especially in low-income Black, Latino and Native American communities where it can be difficult to access foods that are affordable, healthy and culturally familiar," said PHI President and CEO Dr. Mary Pittman, DrPH. "The positive results of Healthy Food Rx show that we can build systemic supports that help people eat well, live healthier lives and thrive."

## How Healthy Food Rx Works

The Healthy Food Rx program is part of Abbott's *Future Well* Communities, which is a multi-year initiative aimed to advance health access and equity by removing the barriers that prevent people with diabetes from living healthy lives.

Abbott partnered with PHI CWN to design and implement Healthy Food Rx with Stockton-based organizations, with funding support from Abbott's foundation the Abbott Fund. Community Medical Centers (CMC), a local federally qualified health

center in Stockton, identified potential Healthy Food Rx participants. Program participants received food boxes from the Emergency Food Bank Stockton/San Joaquin (EFB), delivered directly to their home every other week for one year. The boxes included ingredients for a family-sized healthy meal with vegetables and fruits, as well as pantry staples such as beans, rice and nuts. The box also contained a recipe card and link to an optional online cooking class with EFB, which provided additional guidance and diabetes education.

"Nutritious food is critical for managing diabetes and staying healthy," said Dr. Leonard Hansen, Ph.D., CEO, Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin County. "Healthy Food Rx demonstrates how delivering healthy food and educational support can help improve health and build food security for the people who need it most."

"This recent study shows the powerful impact Healthy Food Rx has had on community health and well-being," said Christine Noguera, CEO, Community Medical Centers. "Community health centers like CMC have always worked with patients to manage chronic conditions like diabetes. Abbott's initiative combining regular access to healthy food with primary care and health education has made all the difference for people living with diabetes. We were proud to participate in this important research."

All participants were invited to participate in the research study coordinated by PHI CWN, which included surveys at enrollment and at six and 12 months, in addition to capturing lab-verified glycated hemoglobin A1C values from medical records.

Complete study results can be found on the [PHI website](#).

#### **About the Public Health Institute and the Center for Wellness and Nutrition**

The Public Health Institute, an independent nonprofit organization, advances wellbeing and health equity with communities around the world. PHI develops research, leadership and partnerships to build strong public health policy, programs, systems and practices. For more information, visit [www.phi.org](http://www.phi.org). The Center for Wellness and Nutrition (CWN), a program of the Public Health Institute, is a national leader in developing campaigns, programs and partnerships to promote wellness and equitable practices in the most vulnerable communities in California and across the country.

#### **About Abbott and the Abbott Fund**

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For further information: Abbott Media: Angela Duff, [angela.duff@abbott.com](mailto:angela.duff@abbott.com), 847-224-0365; Public Health Institute Media: Brandie Campbell, [bcampbell@phi.org](mailto:bcampbell@phi.org), 510-285-5548

