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Food Rx: A Community-University Partnership to Prescribe Healthy Eating on the South Side of Chicago

Anna P. Goddu, Tonya S. Roberson, Katie E. Raffel, Marshall H. Chin & Monica E. Peek 

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Abstract

Patients living with diabetes in underserved communities face significant challenges to healthy eating. To support them, we need interventions that integrate community resources into the healthcare setting. A “prescription” for healthy food may be a promising platform for such a community-linked intervention: it can promote behavior change, provide nutrition education, include financial incentives, and connect patients to local resources. We describe Food Rx, a food prescription collaboratively developed by a university research team, Walgreens, a local farmers market, and six health centers on the South Side of Chicago. We share preliminary lessons learned from implementation, highlighting how each stakeholder (university, community partners, and clinics) contributed to this multifaceted effort while meeting research standards,

organizational priorities, and clinic workflow demands. Although implementation is in early stages, Food Rx shows promise as a model for integrating community and healthcare resources to support the health of underserved patients.

KEYWORDS:

diabetes disparities nutrition community behavioral prescription

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Additional information

Notes on contributors

Tonya S. Roberson

Tonya S. Roberson is currently a doctoral student at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. She was affiliated with the University of Chicago at the time this study was conducted.

Katie E. Raffel

Katie E. Raffel is currently an internal medicine resident at the University of California at San Francisco.

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