Addressing Food Insecurity in Prenatal Women Enrolled In San Francisco WIC

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Why does Prenatal Food Insecurity Matter?

Health Impact of Food Insecurity During Pregnancy

- Perinatal/infant mortality
- Non Normal/low birth weight (>8 lbs or <5.8 lbs)
- Birth defects
- Inappropriate weight gain during pregnancy
- Impact on infant health, growth and development
- Gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia
- Mental health issues such as perceived stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms and loss of control
Food insecurity rate among prenatal women in San Francisco

MIHA Data

Food insecurity rates during pregnancy - Trend 2010-2014

Sample size for SF was 402 of which 190 were prenatal WIC Participants
Advocating for Local Food Resources for SF WIC Families

SF Food Security Task Force

MIHA Data

Priority to address food insecurity among prenatal women

SF Health Improvement Project

Mayor’s add back budget for food vouchers - 50% funding allocated to pregnant mothers

CALIFORNIA WIC

VOUCHERS 4 VEGGIES

SFDPH
Local non-profit launched in 2015-Local food purchasing supplement program.

EatSF collaborates with 60+ community distribution points for vouchers and has a network of corner stores, grocers and farmer’s markets that accept the vouchers

Participants are enrolled in the EatSF program by their healthcare providers, or through an affiliation with a community-based organization.
Target Population: Prenatal women at all 6 DPH WIC clinics in San Francisco

Offered EatSF vouchers at any prenatal appointment regardless of gestational weeks

Participant was informed that this was a pilot program and not a WIC benefit and will not impact WIC eligibility or participation

Some prenatals received starter EatSF vouchers from other local organizations who referred them to receive WIC services and to continue the EatSF benefit
At enrollment the participant completed a pre-survey and an enrollment form. A post-survey was completed when she received the last set of vouchers.

Participants received $40/month of EatSF vouchers for 6 months. Checks were $5 each.

Number of months issued matched the number of months of WIC checks.
Showed prenatal mothers the list of participating stores to facilitate her enrollment decision.

Alternates could not enroll a prenatal mother however they can pick up the vouchers at subsequent appointments.

Asked the EatSF team to enroll WIC vendors to accept EatSf Vouchers
WIC and Eat SF Partnership—Challenges

Added additional time and effort to the current work flow—Administrative work was unfunded.

WIC team had to provide guidance around development of program materials including orientation brochure, pre and post survey and enrollment form.

Confusion at the store during redemption since EatSF vouchers issued by other organizations/programs were dated differently.

Not all WIC stores accept EatSF vouchers.
845 WIC prenatal mothers were enrolled between February 2017- August 2017

Preliminary pre- and post data is available for 569 prenatal mothers

**Pre and Post Food Insecurity Rates (Preliminary data)**
- **Low+very low**: 15.58%
- **Marginal**: 38.42%
- **Post-Survey**: 53.86%

**Baseline Food Insecurity Rates (FIR) by preferred language**
- **English**: 55.29%
- **Spanish**: 62.04%
- **Chinese**: 46.77%
Prenatal mothers reported a higher baseline intake of fruits and vegetables at 2.5 servings/day compared to other population groups receiving EatSF vouchers.

Very little increase in F&V intake was reported from baseline to follow-up survey.
WIC and Eat SF Partnership - Redemption rates

Average Redemption Rates - 79%

Total amount redeemed by WIC participants since February 2017: $161,090
Next Steps

Streamline operational process of check issuance

Discuss long-term feasibility of such program within WIC

Advocate for robust referrals systems to WIC

Participate in the larger city-wide conversation around poverty as the root cause of food insecurity

Advocate for outreach efforts to ensure prenatal women enroll in WIC as early as possible