

Supporting healthy food purchases at local farmers market

Chorus Community Health Plans (CCHP), an affiliate of Children's Wisconsin, is committed to the communities they serve and passionate about supporting community members' health and wellness. Over the last five years, CCHP has partnered with the Brown Deer Farmers Market to support healthy food purchases by market patrons.

CCHP's investment allows the market to offer dollar-for-dollar matching for every electronic benefits transfer (EBT) purchase. Those using FoodShare, Women Infants and Children (WIC) or senior voucher programs get their dollars doubled on healthy fruit and vegetable purchases. For example, if someone uses their benefits to purchase \$20 at the market, they would get an additional \$20 to spend towards additional healthy food. Additionally, CCHP provides healthy seasonal recipes incorporating the produce purchased at the market.

Many families across the state struggle with food insecurity, including in Milwaukee. Food insecurity is much more common among households that have low incomes, are headed by a single parent, have limited education levels, or are Black and/or Hispanic. In fact, the disparity in food security between Black and White households in Wisconsin is among the largest in the country. While the food insecurity rate in Wisconsin is lower than the national average, rates in Milwaukee County exceed the national average. Supporting families in purchasing more healthy food options through the Brown Deer Farmers Market provides an opportunity to address key health inequities in our community.

Incentive match programs like this one have been demonstrated to increase participants' consumption of fruits and vegetables. Healthy meals can reduce risks of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stress and mental illness. However, fresh vegetables and fruit are often expensive, putting healthier options out of reach for many. That's why CCHP supports Brown Deer Farmers Market match efforts to extend families' dollars further to support healthy food purchases.

-Children's Wisconsin-Milwaukee