

Morris Heights Health Center combats food insecurity among Bronx seniors

Morris Heights Health Center (MHHC) is working to address negative health outcomes impacted by food insecurity for seniors residing in the Bronx.

According to a 2021 report on Food Insecurity in New York State by the United Hospital Fund and Boston Consulting Group, nearly 2 million New Yorkers face food insecurity, including 75,000 New Yorkers over the age of 65. This equates to a 36% increase since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Studies show that people who experience food insecurity are

affected by diet-sensitive chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Through a new partnership with the Food Bank for New York City, MHHC will distribute healthy meal kits to qualifying seniors in the West Bronx and surrounding areas at no cost to the participant.

The meal kits are part of the Food Bank for New York City's federally funded Commodity Supplemental Food



Program (CSFP). The program provides monthly food assistance to over 600,000 low-income seniors in New York City. The meal kits are specifically designed to supplement needed sources of nutrients typically lacking in participants' diets. The kits contain nonperishable food items such as shelf-stable milk, fruits and vegetables, meats, grains, cereal, and juices.

MHHC's senior housing facility, located at 57 West Burnside Avenue, will serve as one of the programs distribution sites in the West Bronx area. The health center will distribute the meal kits the second Monday of every month, where participants or their proxy will be able to pick up the items.

To qualify for CSFP, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- At least 60 years of age or older.
- A New York State resident.
- An income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (based on household income).

On January 7, 2022, MHHC hosted an onsite registration session at their senior housing facility, where the health center's community outreach team was able to enroll over 57 seniors into the program.

"Community Health Centers' have served as a safety net for the medically underserved and low-income communities for more than 50 years," explained President & CEO, Mari G. Millet. "All too often we find that our seniors living on a fixed income must make the difficult

decision to choose between their next meal or basic necessities. Through our partnership with the Food Bank for New York City, we are committed to providing food assistance and promoting healthy eating behaviors that can limit hospitalizations and health expenses among older adults."

In addition to the meal kits, the program offers participants guidance on preparing nutritious meals, including cooking demonstrations, dissemination of nutrition and health information, and referrals to health care and social services.

Eligible seniors interested in participating in the program can complete an application at MHHC's distribution site or contact their community outreach team at 347-658-2112 for more information.

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