



OneCare Vermont

— Health Equity Collaboration — Increasing Access to the 3SquaresVT Nutrition Program

Food Access Link to Health Outcomes

Food insecurity is a social risk factor linked to negative health outcomes and increased health costs. A longstanding concern in our state and nation, food insecurity has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic disruptions. Increasing access to federal nutrition programs has been proven to decrease food insecurity, reduce emergency department utilization and inpatient stays—the largest financial strains on our health care system—and increase primary care engagement, all which support preventive health practices and improved health outcomes.

Why 3SquaresVT (aka SNAP*)?

- **A longstanding, sustainable nutrition program:** 3SquaresVT (known nationally as SNAP) is a federal program that brings funds into our state and is available to anyone who meets eligibility criteria.
- **Ease of use to increase food access:** Compared to charitable food resources, 3SquaresVT is flexible – it can be used in participants’ regular food shopping outlets and does not have seasonal or geographic restrictions.
- **Proven to improve health outcomes:** Much of the national current research linking food access interventions and improved health outcomes is based on SNAP participation.
- **A launch point for other nutrition programs:** Other safety net programs build from 3SquaresVT, including nutrition education, farmers market incentives, and calculations for school meal funding which make universal meals possible for all students as part of their education experience, further relieving family food budgets and increasing overall food access.

** Formerly called “food stamps,” the federal nutrition program was renamed in 2008 to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) with the option for states to choose their own name. Vermont chose “3SquaresVT.”*

Pilot Overview

Identify Targeted Outreach Audience: OneCare is committed to health equity so that everyone can attain their full health potential and attends to health disparities across five domains of equity, including food access. In this pilot project, OneCare partners with N1 Health to analyze data to identify patients likely to be experiencing food insecurity and who are eligible for 3SquaresVT—particularly those where there is the lowest enrollment categories: those in the 3SquaresVT expanded income eligibility range of 130-185% of the federal poverty line (FPL) and the 60+ age category.

Continued from Pilot Overview: **Develop and Implement Outreach Strategy**

Equipped with a data and analytics report from OneCare, Bi-State Primary Care Association (BSPCA) partners with the director of population health at Community Health in Rutland to conduct direct outreach to identified patients. Hunger Free Vermont and BSPCA develops additional outreach strategies and messaging to support the direct outreach conducted by Community Health and connect patients with application assistance to access 3SquaresVT benefits.

Pilot Goals

1. **Analyze:** Harness the unique OneCare/N1 Health data insights collaboration to generate custom, targeted 3SquaresVT enrollment outreach lists.
2. **Message:** Connect and strengthen collaboration between the Community Health practice and community partners—like the Vermont Foodbank—that can provide 3SquaresVT promotion and enrollment assistance.
3. **Outreach:** Collaborate on effective outreach channels and messaging related to food access that can be uniquely provided by health care partners in a region, integrating strategies for building social context around 3SquaresVT that removes stigma and normalizes participation.
4. **Evaluate:** Track progress on 3SquaresVT enrollment outreach activities and adjust strategy as needed. Over time, evaluate available data to determine impact of this program on patient outcomes and related OneCare goals.
5. **Replicate:** Outline a replicable or similar outreach plan for 3SquaresVT enrollment campaigns in other regions. Use learnings from this pilot to inform future opportunities to address social needs in a manner which may improve health outcomes.

