



Texas Consortium *for the*  
Non-Medical Drivers of Health

*Advancing Research, Policy and Practice*

# Food Is Medicine Program Designs and Strategies in Texas

June 7, 2023

A shopping cart filled with various food items, including Maruchan Ramen Noodle Soup and canned goods. The cart is filled with several boxes of Maruchan Ramen Noodle Soup in various flavors like Beef, Pork, and Oriental. There are also several cans of food, including a can of Campbell's Soup and a can of instant noodle soup. The cart is filled to the brim, suggesting a large quantity of food being purchased.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

How the VA is using Food is Medicine programs to impact Veteran health and well-being



## WHAT IS FOOD IS MEDICINE?

- Intersection between nutrition and healthcare
- Programs, like produce prescriptions and medically tailored meals or groceries
- Expected outcomes to prevent, manage, and treat chronic diet-related diseases

## ROLE OF THE VA IN FOOD IS MEDICINE

- With support from the newly established VHA Food Security Office and Rockefeller Foundation, the Houston VA, along with Salt Lake City VA, will pilot Fresh Connect, a produce prescription program
- Since Fall 2022, we have been building the implementation and evaluation of the pilot in partnership with researchers, social workers, and dietitians.
- Each site will enroll 250 Veterans with a diet-related health condition and food insecurity, or risk for food insecurity, to receive financial support to purchase fresh produce from grocery stores over the course of 12 months AND nutrition education.

# WHY VETERANS?

- Diet-related conditions like diabetes has high prevalence among Veterans
- Veterans who are food insecure are more likely than civilian counter-parts to reduce intake or skip meals
- Among Veterans, food insecurity was associated with depression and suicide ideation





OUR GOAL IS TO HELP VETERANS CONSUME  
HEALTHIER DIETS BY SUPPORTING THEIR  
HOME FOOD ENVIRONMENT

03/24/20



# Not All Who Wander Are Lost – the Waco Family Medicine FIM Journey

Burritt W. Hess, MD, FAAFP



What does a pair of partnering organizations do when they find themselves deeply into a collaborative process only to discover that in continuing, they are both beginning to diverge from their stated missions, values and capacity?





# Reconfiguration





Thank you!

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WACO  
FAMILY  
MEDICINE



# ESSENTIAL TO HOUSTON'S MOST VULNERABLE

FOR OVER 50 YEARS

Established by **Harris County** in 1965 to provide care to **underserved** residents

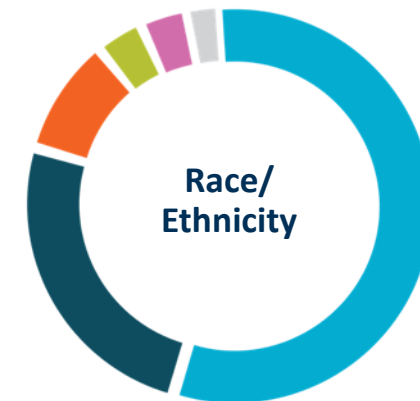
Harris Health cared for **254,967 unique patients** in 2020, with 54% **uninsured** and 90% hailing from **communities of color**



- Harris Health: 44%
- FQHCs: 36%
- Other Nonprofit Clinics: 20%

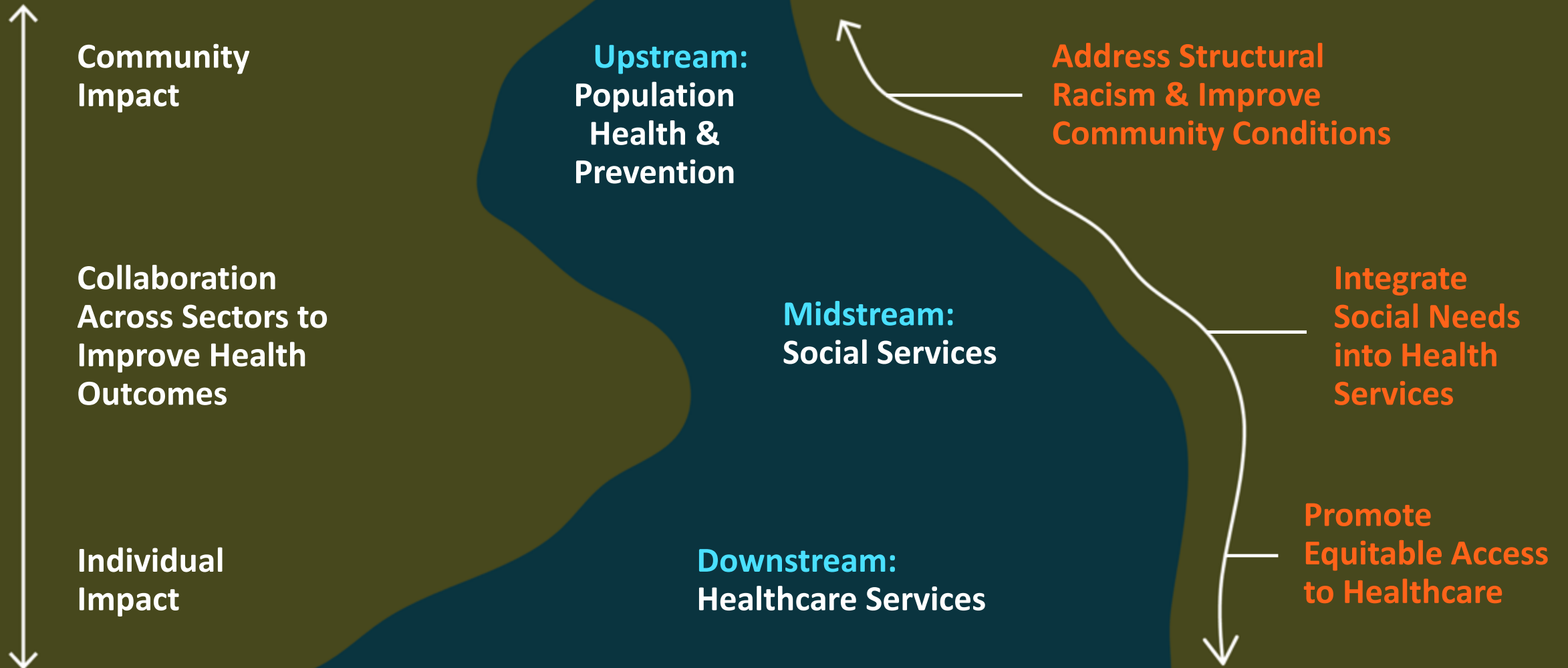


- Uninsured: 54%
- Medicaid: 22%
- Medicare: 11%
- Commercial/Other: 13%






- Hispanic/Latino: 57%
- Black/African American: 25%
- White: 10%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 3%
- Middle Eastern/North African: 3%
- Other: 2%

# HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY



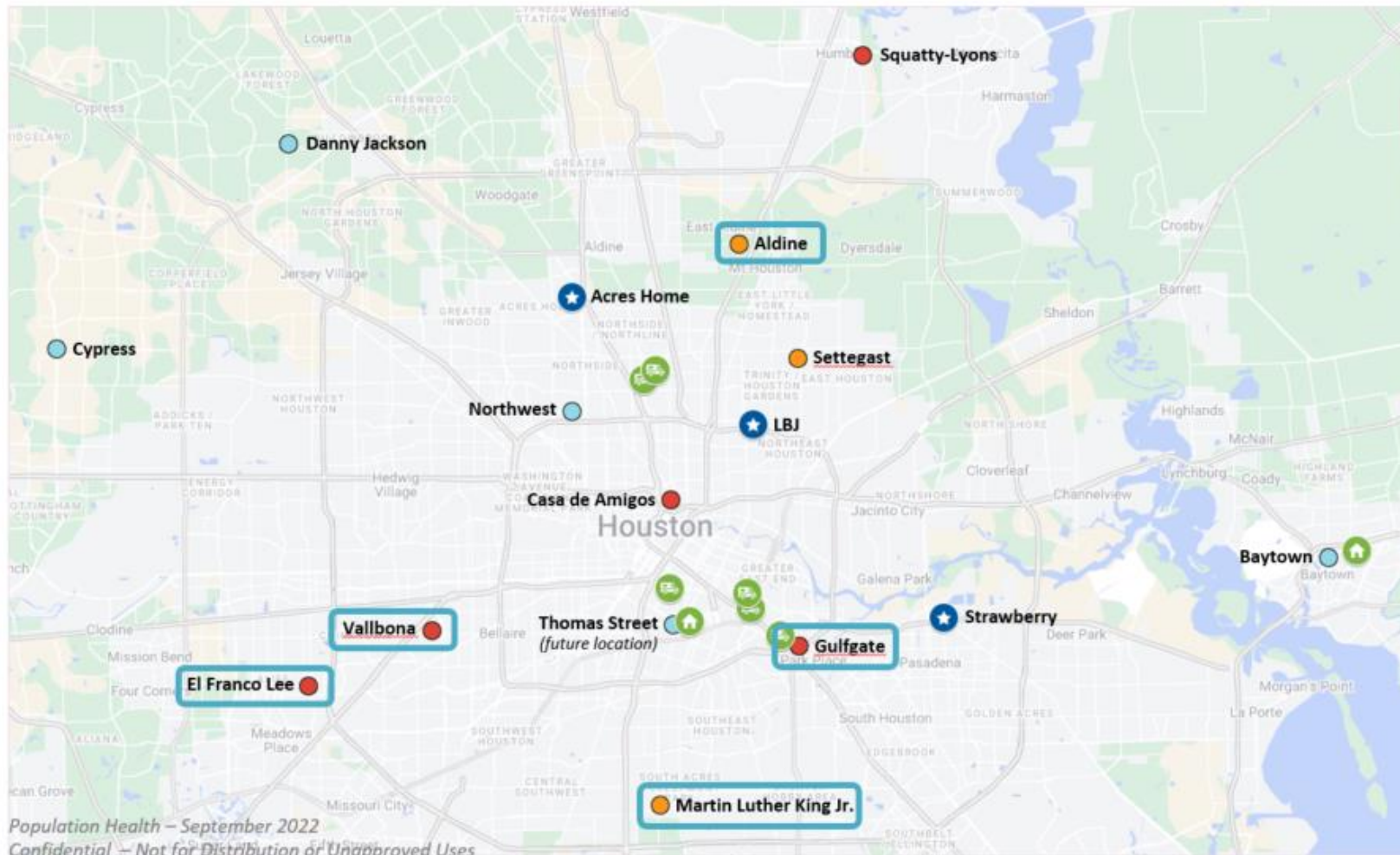
# Addressing FI in Patients

Three Primary Types of Programming to Address Food Insecurity

	 <p>1</p> <p>Connection to Federal and State Benefits</p>	 <p>2</p> <p>Increased Access to Healthy Foods</p>	 <p>3</p> <p>Nutrition Education and Food Literacy</p>
<i>Goal</i>	Empower and support patients eligible for existing services	Provide supplemental assistance to patients and families who are food insecure and/or living in a food desert	Offer wrap-around support services that build healthy life skills and habits that acknowledge environmental limitations (e.g., limited access to produce)
<i>Primary Services Offered</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SNAP enrollment assistance program</li> <li>• On-campus WIC Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency food</li> <li>• On-site food pantry</li> <li>• Discounted produce partnership</li> <li>• Free meal program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition/cooking classes</li> <li>• Budget-friendly, healthy recipes</li> <li>• Grocery store tours</li> </ul>
<i>Additional Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School meal program enrollment</li> <li>• Senior meal program enrollment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital-owned grocery store</li> <li>• Store discounts and vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community garden</li> <li>• School food service enhancement support</li> </ul>

Source:

# Food Insecurity Prevalence and Local Resources



- HFB FFC Resource
- HHS Food Farmacy Location
- HHS Clinic - Low FI
- HHS Clinic - Medium FI
- HHS Clinic - High FI

Population Health – September 2022  
 Confidential – Not for Distribution or Unapproved Uses

# EXEMPLAR EQUITY IMPACT

## HARRIS HEALTH'S FOOD FARMACY PROGRAM

Recognized by America's Essential Hospitals for improving outcomes and reducing disparities for diabetes patients.

### THE PROBLEM: DIABETES DISPARITIES



Harris Health provides equitable service delivery, but racial/ethnic disparities in A1c control persist for the populations we serve

### ROOT CAUSE: UNADDRESSED RESOURCE & SKILLSET NEEDS



The fundamental structural determinants of A1c control include adequate access to healthy foods, nutritional knowledge, and skillsets to manage chronic disease

### THE SOLUTION: FOOD FARMACY PROGRAM



Food Farmacy provides 30 lbs of fresh, healthy foods biweekly + skills-based training to food-insecure patients with uncontrolled diabetes

### THE IMPACT: IMPROVED OUTCOMES & SAVINGS



“I have gone from a 11.9 A1c to now a 6.4. I’m very proud of that....It made a huge difference, I feel so much better. I’m only 55 years old. I need to be living right and I’m doing it - thanks to them.”

– Harris Health FoodRx Patient