



Farms & Health

A GUIDE TO FARM &
GARDEN PROGRAMS
IN HEALTHCARE



"We pay the doctor to make us better,
when we should really be paying the farmer to keep us healthy."
--Robyn O'Brien



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
HOW CHANGE STARTS	6
TYPES OF GROWING SPACES	8
PROGRAM AREAS	13
Community Garden	14
Demonstration Kitchen.	15
Education: Field Trips & Tours.	16
Gardening Classes.	17
Growing	18
Therapy	22
Workshops & Retreats.	23
Other	24
TOOLKITS & RESOURCES	26
CASE STUDIES	28
Cancer Treatment Centers of America.	29
Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System	30
Fairview Hospital	31
Henry Ford West Bloomfield	32
Island Hospital	33
Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital	34
University of Vermont Medical Center	35
Watertown Regional Medical Center	36
HOSPITAL FARM/GARDEN LISTING	37
CONTACT	38

Introduction

Why Farms and Hospitals?

At a time when diet-related disease is at an all-time high, there is an opportunity for a paradigm shift in the healthcare system. The focus for decades has been the treatment of symptoms, but a new focus on the social determinants of health and primary prevention is opening the door to meaningful, patient-centered wellness care. A University of Maryland study (2013) found that one's behavior and physical environment--including the foods they have access to and consume--account for 70% of health outcomes, compared to just 10% from medical care. If health systems want to treat and prevent disease, they are coming to realize that their scope must widen to include wellness more broadly. Healthy eating is a critical piece of wellness, and a key determinant for a number of potential ailments. Health Care Without Harm reports that hundreds of hospitals across the country now offer on-site farmers' markets, on-site gardens or farms, and locally-sourced produce in patient and staff meals. Farm-to-Healthcare programs and pledges address a growing need for nutritional education and healthy food access. Such efforts combine food and health systems using diverse partnerships and creative programming. One such embodiment of farm-to-healthcare programming is on-site cultivation. These growing programs combine healthy food procurement, nutrition education, physical activity, volunteerism, place-based awareness, environmental sustainability, and other benefits.





Purpose of Document

Healthy food in healthcare isn't new; hundreds of hospitals have instituted local or sustainable food procurement strategies. Therefore, institutional purchasing is not the focus of this document, although several toolkits and guides on those strategies are referenced in the Toolkits & Resources section. The focus of this document is healthcare institutions with a more direct role in agriculture and horticulture. Hospitals with formal farm and garden programs are growing, but are still relatively unique and widely dispersed. This makes it challenging for the staff operating such programs to develop a peer community. As a result, each hospital site finds its own way, and encounters questions and situations that are quite common. These programs make decisions blindly without knowing how others have managed similar challenges, and they find it more difficult to find and build off of others' creative programming ideas. There is, therefore, a growing need for collaboration and networking within the Farm-to-Healthcare community so that hospitals can benefit from one another's ideas, lessons learned, resources, and peer support. This document serves as the beginning of that conversation by introducing the most common types of programs and services, the resources currently available, and peer profiles on some of the trailblazers. It is the hope of the authors that hospital farms and gardens will find one another through this document, and even add to it over time as the network of hospital farms grows.

How Change Starts...

"There is nothing new under the sun."
—Ecclesiastes 1:9, King James Bible

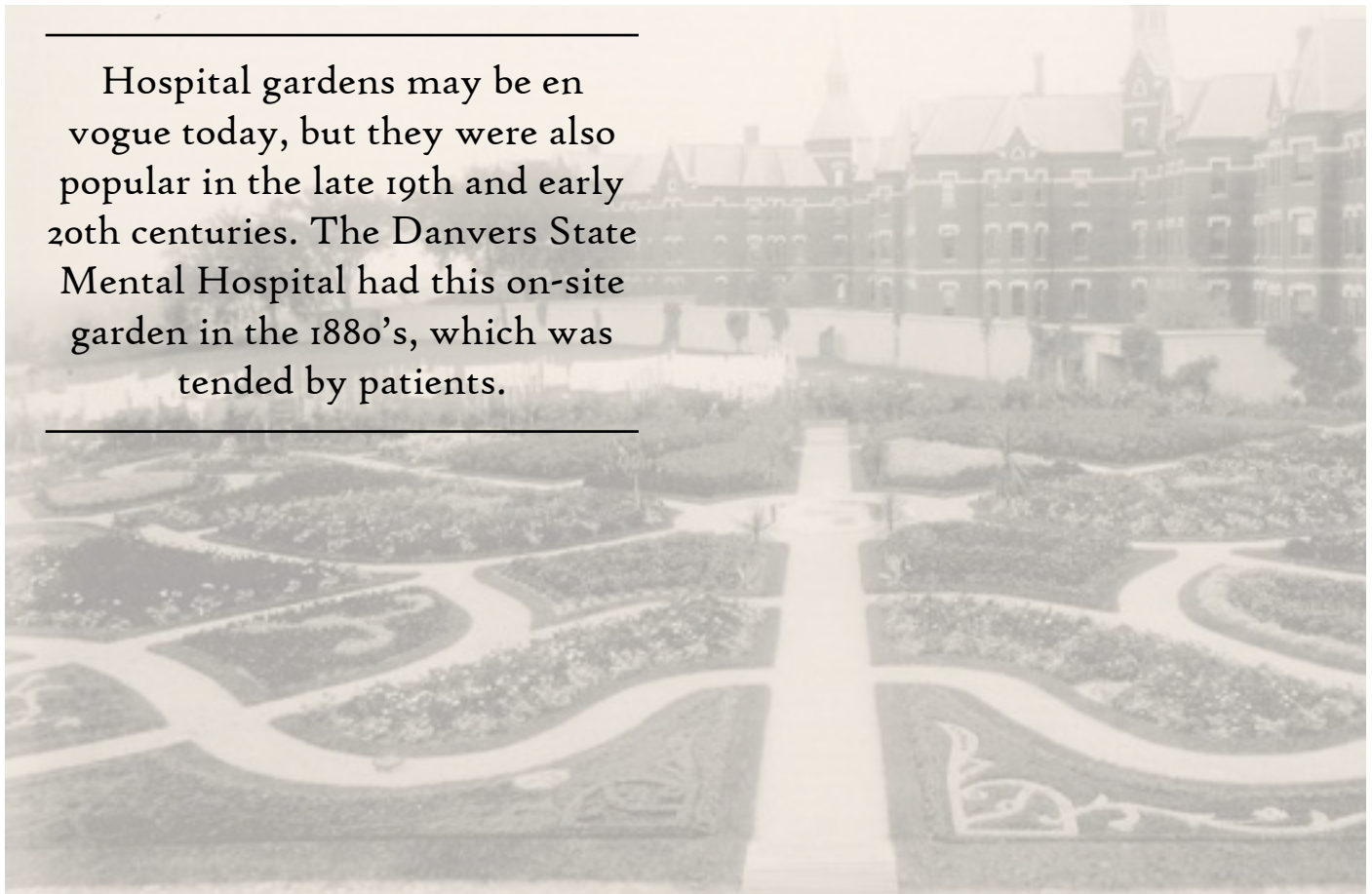
This quote is frequently referenced by artists, writers, poets, and all else who create. It means that change isn't inherently new; it is more likely a rebirth or reimagining of something that already existed in another place or time. Such is true for hospital farms, which have a long history over the centuries and are being rediscovered as part of a broader food system and health movement.



However, even rebirth requires innovators and early adopters. The origin story of many of the current hospital farms begins with a single person or small group of likeminded people. These leaders are often hospital staff and administrators with a love of good food and gardening who then create on-site spaces as personal side projects. These individuals may be nurses, doctors, or administrative staff, and their labors of love usually start small with a community garden or kitchen garden. As these programs flourish and grow into larger on-site programs, these staff members tend to take on increasing levels of ownership and responsibility for the program.

Any hospital farm or garden must have innovators and leaders like this to support the early growth of hospital farm or garden programs. For some hospitals, these growing spaces serve as catalysts for institutional changes via on-site farmers' markets and local food procurement, which they often adopt with support from Practice Greenhealth or Health Care Without Harm. Such efforts play an important role in shifting the culture of healthcare, but they are not the same undertaking as on-site growing space. The unique challenge of providing an actual farm or garden program on hospital property requires staff time and support. Therefore, cultivating on-site leaders who embody healthy living should be a priority for hospitals that want such programming.

Hospital gardens may be en vogue today, but they were also popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Danvers State Mental Hospital had this on-site garden in the 1880's, which was tended by patients.



Types of Growing Spaces

Conventional Farm/Garden

When it comes to growing food, conventional farms and gardens are the type of space that most often come to mind. Food is grown outside in uncovered fields, rows, or smaller plots. The size of the farm or garden is usually a function of the amount of acreage available on site. These types of hospital farms are found at health systems in rural or suburban areas because of their access to abundant land.



Rooftop / Kitchen Gardens

Urban agriculture is growing in popularity, and so, too, is this type of hospital garden. Health systems that are located in dense urban locations do not have access to rolling fields of farmland. However, they do have sunny rooftops. It is also increasingly common to see hospital kitchen gardens, which aren't exclusive to urban locales but have similar growing styles. Both types make efficient use of small space by growing in raised beds or containers.



Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital Rooftop Garden

Greenhouses & Hoophouses

Greenhouses and hoophouses are a staple for locations in moderate climates. Farms and gardens with these on hand can concentrate sunlight in order to maintain adequate temperature for crops. This effectively extends the growing season in climates that might not have active food production otherwise. Hospitals sometimes have these on site as stand-alone projects, or in conjunction with other growing spaces.



The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System's Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Campus

Hydroponics

This type of growing system produces plants without soil by providing roots with mineral nutrient solutions in water. Hydroponics can be very space efficient, and are seen much more often overseas in countries such as Japan. However, this practice is increasingly popular in the United States and is being adopted through small experiments at hospital farms and gardens. This type of growing technique may appeal more to health system staff and patients who are averse to handling "dirty produce." Hydroponics may be a technique that fits into hospitals' sterile environments.



Photo credit: Deb Jacques

Sage grown by resident farmer Trevor Johnson at Henry Ford West Bloomfield's hydroponic greenhouse.

Aquaponics

This system of aquaculture is a growing system in which farmed fish and plants recirculate nutrients. The waste produced by the fish supplies nutrients for the plants, which grow hydroponically and purify the water. Such spaces can range from incredibly small—no more than the size of a standard aquarium—to large systems the size of a greenhouse. More commonly, small versions of this practice are implemented as side projects within existing hoopouses and greenhouses. However, health systems in coastal areas sometimes have stand-alone, large-scale aquaculture.



The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System's Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Campus



Program Areas

Community Gardens

Hospitals can provide opportunities to incorporate healthy foods into peoples' diets by providing space for community gardens. This space is often located in close proximity to the hospital and may be coordinated and managed by either an on-site farmer or volunteer staff. Generally, these programs require a fee to rent a garden plot for a season, and require participants to commit to tending their garden on a regular basis. Members of community gardens are often also required to spend a set amount of time maintaining a community space, and the site may provide access to tools, water, and other resources.



Community gardens may help to fill a need by providing growing space in dense urban areas. Weiss Memorial Hospital (Chicago, IL) provides community garden plots to refugees living in the community who may otherwise have limited access to foods with cultural significance. These spaces can also provide convenience for hospital staff who may not otherwise have access to outdoor space, but want to grow their own food. Both Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital (Indianapolis, IN) and St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI) offer community garden plots specifically for hospital staff.

Demonstration Kitchens

Although modern conveniences allow us to cook and eat food from all over the world at all times of the year, food that is grown locally retains more nutrients, is more sustainable than conventionally grown food, and tastes great. However, cooking and eating seasonally can seem like a daunting task for many people. There are undoubtedly new ingredients that individuals are not familiar with or have never seen before. Hospital farms can serve to educate community members and staff about eating local foods, and its benefits to public health and environmental sustainability. These spaces are well positioned to introduce patients and community members to their region's seasonal foods and how to cook them. Those sites with access to demonstration kitchens can use their on-site produce as a learning tool within broader nutrition and cooking education.

Many hospital farms and gardens provide the produce and staff time needed for nutrition and cooking classes. These classes can combine the knowledge of farmers and gardeners, hospital dietitians, and culinary staff to teach a holistic understanding of the value of eating locally. Rachel White, Sky Farmer at Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital (Indianapolis, IN), works with registered dietitians and wellness staff to provide community education about preparing seasonal foods. She even created an informal short-course, "Fresh Veggie Fridays," for hospital staff to sample what's in season and obtain nutrition tips during their lunch break. Chef Charlie Jilek of the Harvest Café at Watertown Regional Medical Center (Watertown, WI) teaches cooking courses using produce grown on site, and sources locally produced meat to use in his workshops. These courses focus on the nutrition and health benefits of local, seasonal eating with a spotlight on flavor, providing attendees with new skills and confidence in the kitchen.

Environmental Education: Field Trips and Tours

More often than not hospital-based farms are open for patients, staff, and guests to visit as they wish. These spaces can provide an opportunity for restoration in nature away from the bustle of the hospital. They can also serve the function of showcasing the hospital's growing space and commitment to sustainability. Field trips and tours can be coordinated for hospital staff, schools, or community organizations. These short programs can focus on a range of themes from the purpose and production of the farm or garden to natural systems, nutrition, conservation, and stewardship. Some sites even have fully-developed curricula for standards-based education.

The rooftop farm at Weiss Memorial Hospital (Chicago, IL) regularly hosts field trips for local school children to teach them about urban farming and healthy eating. These programs also introduce children to the concept of soil erosion, composting, and water conservation techniques. The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI) works with the local school district to offer curricula on plant growth and nutrition. Field trips give students, teachers, and visitors the opportunity to complement classroom-based instruction with hands-on learning at a farm and hospital.



Our Lady of Victory Girl Scout Troop members (Sarah, Allia, and Caitlin) volunteered to harvest 700 tulips at The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System, and learned about the farm and the harvesting process.

Gardening Classes

Having growing spaces on site provides the ideal opportunity for instruction on how to grow and care for one's own garden. These can be topical, one-time workshops, or more comprehensive instruction. Lisa Hoare, gardener at University of Vermont Medical Center (Burlington, VT), has developed a twenty-five week curriculum for hospital staff. Members of the program learn to tend their own community garden plot, and have the benefit of working alongside their peers and an expert gardener. Weekly classes cover a variety of subjects focusing



on gardening, health, and the broader context of sustainable living. Topics have included garden planning, wild edibles, seed saving, conventional vs. organic, cooperative markets, preservation techniques, and fermentation. Each week's lesson provides a how-to on preparing a healthful snack, and gives students time to evaluate their progress and tend their garden plot.



At left, Lisa Hoare manages garden programs (seen above) at the University of Vermont Medical Center.

Growing Food On-Site for Direct Sale

In order for hospitals to meet the needs of their patients, staff, and the greater community, growing food on site is a natural option. In instances where space, funding, and institutional support align to enable the development of a growing space, the hospital has an opportunity to market hyper-local produce to consumers. Food that is grown organically, minimally processed, and spends little time traveling from field to plate retains more nutrients than conventionally produced food. So it makes sense for the health system to have a stake in producing and marketing such foods. Getting this produce onto the plates of the community can be done in several ways. Among the most common practices are on-site farmers' markets, staff CSAs, and direct sale to hospital patients, staff, and guests through the hospital's food service department.

Farmers' Markets

Food grown on-site can be sold directly from farm to consumer through a farmers' market. This can provide an opportunity for hospital staff and the greater community to interact with the farmer and see first-hand the kinds of seasonal produce available. This enables many individuals to better understand the purpose of a hospital farm or garden, and improves visibility of the local food system.

A farmers' market can take many forms. A multitude of local farmers and vendors can be invited, or there may be the desire to highlight the hospital farm alone. However, inviting other vendors may prove fruitful for leveraging partnerships for the hospital and the farm. The market may take place on-site at the farm, inside the hospital, or even as a roadside stand. In most instances, the ideal location will be dictated by space and time, and may need to be negotiated within the hospital institution.

The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI) hosts a year-round, weekly farmers' market in the lobby of the main building. It also features crafts and eggs from one of its farming partners, The Eisenhower Center, and highlights items from other local farms such as meats and fruit. It also partners with the Washtenaw County Public Health Department's Prescription for Health program, in which patients are "prescribed" fruits and vegetables by their doctor and can obtain those foods with free tokens.



Staff CSA

A CSA (community supported agriculture) program can serve as a means to engage hospital staff in the hospital's local food system. It may also provide a worthwhile revenue stream for a hospital-based farm or garden. Hospital staff sign up to buy a share of produce that is provided weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly throughout the growing season. Several hospitals have piloted small CSA programs for staff that utilizes produce grown on site, including St. Luke's Rodale Institute Organic Farm (St. Luke's University Health Network, Bethlehem, PA) and the Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI.)

For other institutions where growing food on-site has not been an option, CSAs are provided by contracting with local farmers. Island Hospital has been developing and expanding their CSA over the past several years. Through the hard work of dietary and wellness staff and the support of hospital administration, the hospital's initial CSA has grown to include weekly "Fresh to Go" produce specials at a weekly farm stand that is run by a local farmer.



Farm to Fork within the Hospital: Cafeterias & Cafes

Producing food for on-site consumption is the impetus for the creation of many hospital-based farms and gardens. The desire to provide patients with locally grown, organic produce is a growing trend with good reason. It provides an opportunity to model healthful behavior to patients and highlight the flavor of fresh, seasonal foods. While it may not be possible for many hospitals to supply all of the produce needed to serve patients and staff, highlighting farm-fresh ingredients can help to raise awareness of the importance of eating locally. It can also encourage healthy habits among the community. When possible, site-grown produce can be supplemented by locally-sourced items through the development of purchasing guidelines for the hospital's procurement department.

Many hospitals have built their farms specifically to feed patients and staff, and often these efforts are co-managed by dietitians and culinary staff. Fairview Hospital, part of the Berkshire Health System in Great Barrington, MA, has a small garden run by Dietary Supervisor Maggie Delgrande. It provides seasonal produce to the hospital's café and to patients through a room service model. The chefs at Harvest Café at Watertown Regional Medical Center (Watertown, WI) grows food on site to showcase in meals for patients, staff, and the community.



Therapy Programs

Hospitals play an important role in supporting wellness and primary prevention. Hospital-based farms and gardens are a natural opportunity to promote physical and mental health through active use of green space. It is increasingly the case, in fact, that researchers cite green space as an important asset for mindfulness, mental vitality, stress reduction, reduced recovery time from surgeries, and lower blood pressure.

Mental Health

Farms and gardens can support mental health in multiple ways, the simplest of which is providing a sense of "being away" so that mental capacity can be restored. It is also true, however, that time spent in nature doing meaningful pursuits (such as gardening or volunteering) also has effects on mental well-being. This is one reason why mental health facilities, rehabilitation centers, and nursing homes frequently incorporate gardens and trails into their site plans. The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI) has embraced green therapy through its partnership with Eisenhower Center, a rehabilitation organization for patients with traumatic brain injuries. Their outpatients visit the wheelchair-accessible hoop house for quiet time and physical activity. Similarly, Fountain House, a mental health facility in New York City, has a Horticulture Unit that is over 30 years old. They maintain three outside gardens, provide flower bouquets for patients, and grow food in a rooftop hydroponic garden for the kitchen.

Physical Health

Active participation in gardening clubs or on-site farm programming is an excellent way for hospitals to promote physical activity. Gardening is a perfect option for many at-risk populations who may have mobility limitations or health risks. Providing regular opportunities for on-site volunteering or community gardening is one way to endorse physical activities that are meaningful and enjoyable.

Customized Workshops & Staff Retreats

On-site farms and gardens provide ample opportunities for learning and working together. These natural outdoor spaces give hospital staff an opportunity to “be away” without leaving the hospital’s campus. They also help to build strong connections to the health system, the environment, and the local food system. Depending on the infrastructure and staff available, farms and gardens can provide opportunities for a range of activities, the very least of which is access to fresh, local produce for a nutritious staff meal. Growing spaces can be used to facilitate team-building activities, departmental retreats, sustainability education, cooking and nutrition workshops, yoga and exercise, and group volunteering. Hosting these activities in a natural setting can encourage healthcare staff to think creatively about approaches to health and nutrition. They may also provide staff with helpful inspiration for promoting healthy lifestyles to patients. Furthermore, holding meetings and staff activities at on-site farms and gardens can provide an opportunity for mental restoration, as studies show that time spent in nature can restore mental vitality and alertness. Bringing staff to outdoor retreats can help them to rejuvenate and return to work restored.



Staff members from Trinity Health came to The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System for a staff team-building retreat, during which they volunteered on the farm, harvested their own produce, and prepared lunch as a group in the hospital's culinary studio.

Other Experimental Programs

Not all hospital farms and gardens have been around long enough to venture beyond the typical types of programming. Those with a few years under their belts have expanded into new territory by incorporating less common programming. These pursuits are diverse, unique, and exciting. Here are just a few examples of some of those innovative programs:

Patient Gifts and Packages

St. Luke's Rodale Institute Organic Farm (Bethlehem Township, PA) has recently started providing maternity gift baskets for new mothers to take home with them. In the coming years, it may become more common for hospital farms to make giveaways and take-home packages to cardiac or oncology patients.



Pollinator Love

For centuries, traditional homestead farmers have enjoyed the benefits of on-site pollinator gardens and habitats so they can reap the benefits of plant pollination. Hospital farms, too, are electing to partake in the use of pollinator gardens, beehives, and wild habitat for local insects. The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor, MI), St. Luke's Rodale Institute Organic Farm (Bethlehem Township, PA), and Stony Brook Heights Rooftop Farm (Stony Brook, NY) all have beehives and/or pollinator gardens on site. In Michigan, the Farm hosts beehives, a monarch butterfly garden, and a pollinator garden for a diversity of insects, which are incorporated into educational programming.

Waste Not

Farms and gardens represent the production and provisioning of healthy food, but in many cases they are also a steward of environmental sustainability. To that end, composting of food waste is an important activity, as well as an educational opportunity. For example, Fairview Hospital of Berkshire Health Systems (Great Barrington, MA) instituted a compost recycling program for hospital food waste, and attempts to collect about 240 gallons of compostable materials each month.





Toolkits & Guides

Existing Toolkits and Guides

"Healthy Food in Health Care" by Health Care Without Harm

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing; Healthy Menus

"Farm Fresh Healthcare Project: How-to Guide" by Community Alliance with Family Farmers and Health Care Without Harm

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing; Building Regional Food Systems

"Going Green: A Resource Kit for Pollution Prevention in Health Care--Farmers' markets and CSAs on Hospital Grounds" by Health Care Without Harm

Content: Farmers' markets; Community Supported Agriculture

"Hospital Farm Direct Purchasing: A Guide to Ensuring Safe and Sustainable Food" by Health Care Without Harm

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing; On-site Growing

"Healthy Food, Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Communities: Stories of Health Care Leaders Bringing Fresher, Healthier Food Choices to their Patients, Staff, and Communities" by Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Food and Health Program

Content: Case Studies

"Buy Fresh, Buy Local - Sourcing Fruits and Vegetables at Inova Health"

Content: Case Studies

"Strategies to Increase Sustainable Food Options via GPOs and Distributors" by Health Care Without Harm

Content: Sustainable Procurement

"The Farm Incubator Toolkit: Growing the Next Generation of Farmers" by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) and the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

Content: Starting a Farm/Garden; Case Studies

"Connecting Sustainable Farmers to Hospitals: A Farmer/Producer-Focused Report" by Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and Earth Wise Communications

Content: Sustainable Procurement; Farm to Institution Purchasing; Forming Advisory Teams

"Using Written Protocols to Guide Direct Procurement of Food From Sustainable Farmers, Producers" by Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing

"Farm to Early Childhood Programs: A Step-By-Step Guide" by Jekeia Murphy, Julia Smith, and Colleen Matts

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing

"Using Food Hubs to Create Sustainable Farm to School Programs" by Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Content: Sustainable Procurement; Farm to Institution Purchasing; Food Hubs

"Garden to Cafeteria: A Step-by-Step Guide" by Kaitlin Koch and Colleen Matts

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing

"Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-by-Step Guide" by Betty Izumi and Colleen Matts

Content: Farm to Institution Purchasing



Case Studies

Case Study: Phoenix, AZ

Cancer Treatment Centers of America

The Seed:

Frank Caputo, the executive chef at Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) in Phoenix, AZ is committed to feeding patients the healthiest meals possible to aid in their treatment and recovery. Growing out of their commitment to source 90% of the food served in CTCA locally, it was a natural next step to establish an on-site farm. This farm came about as a result of a partnership between Frank Caputo and Bob McClendon of McClendon's Select, a local organic grower who had been supplying the hospital with produce. Bob recognized the farmland around the hospital as an opportunity, and guided the hospital in reclaiming 25 acres of conventional farmland for conversion to organic food production. The farm has since grown to include an additional 43 acres of organic cropland at the hospital site.

Taking Root:

The farm is open to the public and is often visited by patients and guests. The primary goal of the farm is to feed patients the healthiest and freshest food that can be produced in the region. While the farm is managed by McClendon's Select, the hospital's culinary staff harvests produce daily and develops the hospital's menus around what items are at their peak.

The Bounty:

The unique partnership between business and hospital has given both McClendon's Select and CTCA a great opportunity. McClendon has been able to grow his business in an area where arable land is not easy to come by. In return, the hospital has all of the organic produce it desires right in its backyard. This has greatly increased the hospital's ability to meet its mission of sourcing 90% of its menu locally. In the future the hospital plans to add an education center with space for cooking, nutrition, and gardening classes, as well as a farmers' market.

Case Study: Ypsilanti, MI

The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System

The Seed:

On April 14, 2010, a horse drawn-plow broke ground to convert four acres of lawn into The Farm at St. Joe's, which has since expanded to almost 25 acres of alfalfa and vegetable farmland. A small team of innovators envisioned a place that could treat chronic diseases while also setting an example of health and stewardship for the community. With the help of volunteers, two hoopouses were constructed to grow crops year-round for the hospital's weekly farmers' market. In 2013, a clinically accessible hoopouse was added for patient therapy. A key factor in the farm's success is ongoing support of clinicians and hospital administrators, including the CEO.

Taking Root:

The Farm's mission to "grow a healthy community" is accomplished through a number of activities and services. The Farm manages a successful weekly farmer's market; grows produce for patient and staff meals; hosts community events and staff retreats; provides educational programming to children, families, and groups; runs a robust volunteer program; and partners with Eisenhower Center to offer green and occupational therapy for traumatic brain injury clients. The Farm also hosts University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University dietetic interns on rotations, and has a presence on the Ypsilanti Community Schools Coordinated School Health Team and the Ann Arbor Farm-to-School Collaborative.

The Bounty:

Over time, the Farm has grown as an advocate for health equity. In 2015, The Farm formally partnered with the Washtenaw County Public Health Department to serve as a vendor for Prescription for Health. Patients in this grant-funded program obtain fresh produce that was "prescribed" to them by their doctor using free tokens. In the spring of 2016, all third- and fifth-grade elementary school Ypsilanti students will take a field trip to the Farm and culinary studio to experience healthy foods in an engaging setting.

Case Study: Great Barrington, MA

Fairview Hospital, Berkshire Health System

The Seed:

In 2006 Fairview Hospital began to increase their focus on incorporating fresh, local, organic produce into the hospital's menu offerings. To support the twenty-five bed hospital, a small garden was planted on a patch of lawn down the street from the hospital. The garden's produce feeds patients, staff, and guests and is spotlighted in the hospital cafeteria. Patients also have the opportunity to sample seasonal menu items through the hospital's room service program.

Taking Root:

The garden exists primarily to provide healthy, local food to patients of the hospital. Highlighting fresh produce on the hospital's menu serves to educate patients about the flavor and nutrition that are inherent in locally grown organic produce.



The Bounty:

Having the opportunity to provide patients with food that is grown steps away from the hospital has been a great success for the hospital's culinary and dietary staff. Working together, they are able to highlight seasonal items and encourage patients to be more mindful of their food choices.

Case Study: Bloomfield Twsp, MI

Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital

The Seed:

The greenhouse and education center housed at the Henry Ford Health System's West Bloomfield campus was built with funding from a generous donor. It houses hydroponic systems for growing produce. The greenhouse now stands at 1500 square feet, attached to an adjacent 1500-square-foot education center. The greenhouse allows for year-round production of organic produce and herbs for the hospital's café, farmers' market, and patient meals.

Taking Root:

The vision for the greenhouse and its education space has always been to provide innovative programs that educate children and the community about chronic disease prevention. The greenhouse also offers public tours, customized tours for special groups, primary prevention education, and event space. All food grown on site goes to the hospital and hospital programming.

The Bounty:

Henry Ford's unique hydroponic greenhouse is helping patients, visitors, and staff to gain added exposure to good, quality food, as well as the appreciation for how it is grown. The use of hydroponic systems and the integrated arrangement for educational space make for a unique space for ecological and agricultural learning. The on-site farmer also works directly with local schools to create and maintain gardens, offering a unique curriculum to the next generation of farmers and health practitioners.



Case Study: Anacortes, WA Island Hospital

The Seed:

The dietary team at Island Hospital has a strong belief in providing access to nutritious local foods to hospital staff and patients. Through their hard work and dedication, they have established a weekly farm stand and CSA at the hospital that includes produce, recipes, and nutrition tips. They partner with local growers to provide seasonal produce, and with other local vendors to provide whole grain breads and baked goods, flowers, honey, and jams.

Taking Root:

The farm stand has been an evolving program, and each year has gained more support from hospital staff and the greater community. The dietary team has been instrumental in reaching out and forming partnerships with local farmers, and working with hospital employees to ensure that the program works for them. Since its beginning, the CSA program has expanded to include "Fresh to Go" bags that allow staff to tailor their order to their taste. They have also worked with the hospital to allow payments to be made directly from employee accounts to make the order and pick-up process convenient and easy. The program is highlighted through weekly e-newsletters alerting staff to what's new at the farm stand. The dietary and wellness staff have also incorporated staff drawings for massage and tai chi, as well as exercise and health competitions in the hospital.

The Bounty:

The farm stand has proven to be a huge success in the hospital, and employees look forward to its return every spring. Staff frequently cite the convenience and variety offered by the "Fresh to Go" program as helping them to incorporate local foods into their diet and make healthy choices routine. In the future, the dietary team plans to create quarterly wellness challenges and hopes to get more fresh, local produce into the hospital's kitchens.

Case Study: Indianapolis, IN

Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital

The Seed:

In 2009, when plans for the new Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital were being developed, hospital administrators felt that having a growing space at the site was imperative. As part of the building plans, a substantial garden was imagined for the roof of the complex and aptly named the Sky Farm.

Taking Root:

The Sky Farm has plots for an employee community garden, is open for field trips and tours, and hosts a variety of programming on site. There have been workshops on growing mushrooms and the benefits of worms in the garden as well as guided meditation and exercise classes. The Sky Farm provides produce for an off-site cooking and nutrition course and co-hosts "Fresh Veggie Fridays." This nutrition program for hospital employees is structured to give staff access to seasonal produce, recipes, and nutrition tips during their lunch breaks. Fresh cut flowers and produce grown at the Sky Farm are also distributed to patients and hospital departments depending on need. All of the produce that is not used through programming is used by the hospital's cafeteria.

The Bounty:

The Sky Farm's greatest successes have been the impact of the nutrition and cut flower programs, because they have been able to reach so many individuals. The off-site nutrition and cooking classes in particular have been so popular that many participants repeat the courses seasonally to learn about the different produce available. In 2016, Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital was recognized as one of twelve hospitals in the country with among the healthiest patient menus by The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

Case Study: Burlington, VT

University of Vermont Medical Center

The Seed:

The University of Vermont Health System is host to a rooftop garden at the University of Vermont Medical Center and a teaching garden at the UVM Fanny Allen Rehabilitation Therapy Center. The rooftop garden began in 2010 as part of an expansion of the hospital system. The impetus for development of a garden came from the hospital's Nutrition Services Department in working to source the majority of the hospital's food locally. Since the opening of the Atrium Garden Café at the hospital in 2015, 100% of the produce grown on the rooftop garden has been used in menu offerings. Prior to the café's opening, the garden was operated as a restorative space for visitors and as a venue for garden education. Now the teaching garden at Fanny Allen serves as an educational garden for hospital staff.

Taking Root:

The teaching garden program at Fanny Allen has been a great opportunity for hospital employees to get outdoors and connect to their local food system. Through the program, participants get their own 64-square-foot garden plot, a weekly two-hour class, and course materials. A wide variety of topics are covered, including garden planning, seed saving, preserving, and each week includes a lesson on nutrition and a short cooking demo. The purpose of the course is to teach participants not only about growing their own food, but about why local food systems are important. It seeks to engage participants in understanding the difference between organic and conventional production, implications of industrial farming on farm workers, and the role of local foods in the local economy. The goal is to empower students to make informed choices and understand their food system.

The Bounty:

The teaching garden program has been a tremendous success. Many participants have expressed that being involved in the program was helpful not only in learning about growing food, but also in building personal confidence. The gardens also bring great value to guests and patients. As many patients come to the hospital for long-term care and recovery, having the garden as a place of refuge from the hospital has been very beneficial.

Case Study: Watertown, WI

Watertown Regional Medical Center

The Seed:

The garden at Watertown Regional Medical Center grew out of former chef Justin Johnson's vision for a healthier menu at the hospital's Harvest Café. Prior to the creation of the garden much of the food served in the hospital was processed and packaged. Seeing the need for a change in the food provided to patients, staff, and guests, Johnson secured space to initiate an 11,000-square-foot garden to supplement Harvest Café's menu. The garden's establishment has made healthier, seasonal options a constant on the Harvest Café menu, and allows a greater range of choice for patients and associates within the hospital.

Taking Root:

The garden is maintained by chefs and kitchen staff from Harvest Café with occasional additional help from the hospital grounds crew. The majority of the produce is used in the café and a small amount is used to support educational programming. The chefs and kitchen staff at Harvest Café host courses to teach hospital staff and the public about cooking seasonally, making nutritious choices, and using locally sourced produce and meat.

The Bounty:

The gardening process has been a learning experience for the Harvest Café culinary staff, but each year brings a greater harvest and a new lesson. The staff has been enthusiastic about discovering and developing new growing techniques and ways to extend their harvests. They have invested in a strong crop of perennial herbs and berries to anchor the garden and continue production year after year. In the future, they hope to invest in hoophouses to extend their growing season and expand community educational programming to broaden their impact.



Hospital
Farm & Garden
Full Listing

Hospital Farms & Gardens

Cancer Treatment Centers of America (Phoenix, AZ)
Castle Medical Center (Kailua, HI)
Connecticut Mental Health Center (New Haven, CT)
Cottage Hospital (Woodsville, NH)
The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ypsilanti, MI)
Fairview Hospital (Great Barrington, MA)
Fountain House Mental Health Facility (New York, NY)
Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital (Willits, CA)
Hawaii State Hospital (Kaneohe, HI)
Henry Ford Hospital (West Bloomfield, MI)
Homestead Hospital (Homestead, FL)
Island Hospital (Anacortes, WA)
Mad River Community Hospital (Arcata, CA)
New Milford Hospital (New Milford, CT)
Overlake Hospital Medical Center (Bellevue, WA)
ProMedica Health Systems (Toledo, OH)
Seattle Children's Hospital (Seattle, WA)
Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hospital (Indianapolis, IN)
St. Luke's Rodale Institute Organic Farm (Bethlehem Twp, PA)
Stony Brook Heights Rooftop Farm (Stony Brook, NY)
University of Vermont Medical Center (Burlington, VT)
Vanguard Weiss Memorial Hospital (Chicago, IL)
Watertown Regional Medical Center (Watertown, WI)
White Memorial Hospital (East Los Angeles, CA)
Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital (Yakima, WA)

This list represents those hospital farm and garden sites that the research team identified between October 2015 and February 2016. This is not an exhaustive list, and has most likely grown. Case studies were selected from this list by reputation and ability to participate.

DOCUMENT AUTHORS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Jana Stewart, MS/MPH

Co-Author

janaemil@umich.edu

Cassidy Dellorto-Blackwell, MS

Co-Author

casariel@umich.edu

Raymond De Young

Project Advisor & Associate Professor

School of Natural Resources & Environment

rdeyoung@umich.edu

Amanda Sweetman

Project Advisor & Farm Project Manager

Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System

amanda.sweetman@stjoeshealth.org



By Cassidy Dellorto-Blackwell (MS) & Jana Stewart (MPH/MS)

A project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science/Master of Public Health
(School of Natural Resources & Environment/School of Public Health)
at the University of Michigan
April 2016

Advisors: Raymond De Young, Associate Professor, School of Natural Resources & Environment
Amanda Sweetman, Farm Manager, The Farm at St. Joseph Mercy Health System