

August 22, 2014 Written Testimony to the CCO Metrics & Scoring Committee

Provided by Lynn Knox, clinical outreach and training coordinator with the Oregon Food Bank

My role with the Oregon Food Bank is to assist clinics in implementation of the two validated questions on food insecurity and provide localized food and nutrition education resource information to clinics staff across the state. This effort started in March and I have worked with about 85 clinics covering nine counties that are now pursuing implementation.

The discussion about food insecurity screening and intervention as a possible new metric was left up in the air at the last Metrics & Scoring Committee meeting. The biggest hanging question was, if patients screen positive for food insecurity, what can we do?

- First, accurate diagnosis and treatment require that health care providers have current information about food security. A child's symptoms of a month on a diet of primarily ramen noodles might be similar to the symptoms of ADHD. Without knowledge of the nutrition issues and related economic barriers, this child might be prescribed medication when what he needs are protein and complex carbohydrates.
- Secondly, unfortunately, no one at Oregon Food Bank would say that there are adequate food assistance and nutrition education resources available in all parts of the state for everyone in need. However, there are resources available everywhere, and often there are some that patients are not using or do not know about.

Nationally, only 39% of eligible adults over 60 receive SNAP benefits (food stamps), according a 2014 study by Feeding America. Information and encouragement from health care professionals and possibly some hands on assistance to access resources when possible can make a major difference in overcoming patient resistance or lack of knowledge.

Oregon Food Bank is committed to working with the CCO's to implement food insecurity screening, sharing lessons learned, and will provide up to date resource information translated into multiple languages for all areas of the state by early in 2015.

Attached are the validated screening questions we (and the US Dept. of Agriculture) recommend. Also attached is a sample handout, designed to be incorporated into an after visit summary which can be reviewed with food insecure patients. We recommend that the questions be asked in writing and that if clinics staff are available to review the information and help patients begin accessing resources the day of the screening, this works best. Some clinics are incorporating the screening questions into a broader health assessment which is fine. We recommend that the screening be done at the clinic level so that the information from patients is up to date when the health care provider sees them. A few months without a paycheck or reduced work hours can throw a family into food insecurity so we recommend at least screening every six months if not every visit.

Screen for Food Insecurity

Suggested Questions:

For each statement, please tell me whether the statement was “often true, sometimes true, or never true” for your household:

A. “Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.”

1. *often true* 2. *sometimes true* 3. *never true* 4. *don't know, or refused*

B. “Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.”

1. *often true* 2. *sometimes true* 3. *never true* 4. *don't know, or refused*

**NOT ENOUGH FOOD FOR YOUR FAMILY?
NEED HELP COOKING/SHOPPING FOR
HEALTHY FOOD ON A BUDGET?**

You might qualify for SNAP (Supplemental nutritional Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps)

- Go to www.211info.org or call 211*

If you are pregnant or have children under five, you may qualify for WIC (The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)

- Go to www.211info.org or call 211*

Most farmer's markets accept SNAP & WIC vouchers, several will match/add to SNAP dollars so you can buy more!

- <http://bit.ly/matchprogram> (list of matching programs)
- <http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/market-finder/> (find market near you that takes SNAP/WIC)

There may be a food pantry in your neighborhood where you can get a box of food for free!

- Go to <http://www.marionpolkfoodshare.org/GetHelp.aspx> or call 503-581-3855
- For Yamill County go to <http://www.yamhillcap.org/food-bank/where-to-get-food/>

Summer meals for kids

- Go to <http://www.summerfoodoregon.org/> or call 211*

Take free gardening classes and learn to grow a portion of your own food!

- Go to <http://www.marionpolkfoodshare.org/Programs/CommunityGardens.aspx> or call 503-581-3855
- Or contact Marion/Polk OSU Extension 503-588-5301
- For Yamhill County go to: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/home-gardening-public>

Learn to cook healthy food and shop on a budget-(stove or oven not required!)

- Contact Megan at Marion/Polk Food Share 503-581-3855
- In Yamhill County, contact Yamhill Regional Food Bank at 503-472-0457

For more nutrition information & low-cost healthy recipes visit:

<https://www.foodhero.org/>

***What is 211?** 211 is a free multi-lingual phone or online service in most areas of the United States for the purpose of providing quick and easy access to information about health, human services and employment assistance. They constantly update local information. Professional Information and Referral Specialists work with callers to assess their needs, determine their options and provide appropriate programs/services, give support, intervene in crisis situations and advocate for the caller as needed.