

REACH NEWSLETTER

YEAR-TO-DATE | 2026



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Raising Access to Fresh Foods

RX Produce Prescription Program Update

The Prescription (Rx) Produce Program is helping make fresh, locally grown food more accessible to families in Oceana County through a 21-week Food as Medicine initiative supported by CDC REACH. Seven weeks into the season, 216 Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes have made their way into the hands of local families, delivering fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost to participants managing chronic health conditions.

The program is implemented in partnership with District Health Department #10 (DHD10) and Trinity Health Shelby, with weekly CSA boxes funded by the Trinity Health Alliance of Michigan.

Through partnerships with healthcare providers, community organizations, and Merten's Farmhouse Market, eligible participants receive a free weekly box of seasonal, locally grown produce, from tomatoes and peppers to strawberries, herbs, and even duck eggs.

By the Numbers



216

Distributed
CSA Boxes



31

Families
Served Each
Week
(on average)



36

Families
reached during
highest
attended week

"The fresh produce has been wonderful. It helps because, as a low-income family, we're not always able to purchase as much fresh produce from the grocery store. We've enjoyed making fresh salads and healthy meals."



More Than a Box of Vegetables

For many families, the program is changing what's realistic to put on the table. *"Unfortunately, chips can be cheaper than fresh produce at the store. Having fresh produce on the counter makes it the first choice."*

Others shared how the weekly deliveries have eased tight budgets and shifted everyday habits.

Financially, it has helped greatly. I think McDonald's misses me.

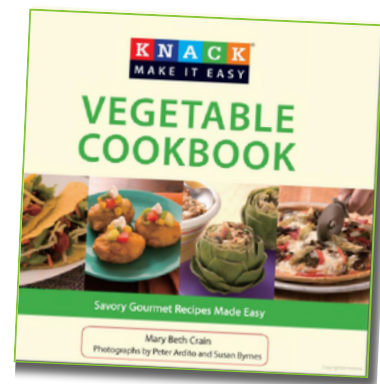
Partners Making It Possible

The Oceana County Council on Aging (OCCOA) hosts the weekly distribution site in Hart and helps connect participants to the program. Any produce left over after pickups and deliveries is shared with seniors in OCCOA programs, stretching the impact even further and cutting down on food waste.

Participants are referred through a network that includes Trinity Health–Shelby Service Area, Northwest Michigan Health Services Inc., DHD10, OCCOA, and Community Health Workers, and for those who can't make it to a distribution site, Community Health Workers deliver boxes directly to their homes.

Beyond the Produce

REACH funding also provided every participating family with a free copy of KNACK Make It Easy: Vegetable Cookbook, by local author Mary Beth Crain, a vegetable-focused cookbook featuring practical recipes to help families make the most of their weekly produce. Participants also received two personalized canvas tote bags featuring exclusive CSA artwork, small touches that help them build confidence in the kitchen and feel part of the CSA community.



Looking Ahead

With 14 weeks still remaining, families will keep receiving their weekly boxes of fresh, local produce. And the benefits don't stop when the growing season ends: participants who complete the program will be eligible for a free six-month membership to a new Food Club launching this fall, extending access to healthy food well beyond summer.

The program continues to show how local partnerships can help reduce barriers to healthy food and make nutritious choices easier for families — a reminder of what's possible when healthcare providers, community organizations, local farms, and funders work toward the same goal.



The Rx Produce Program in Oceana County -
Produce Distribution

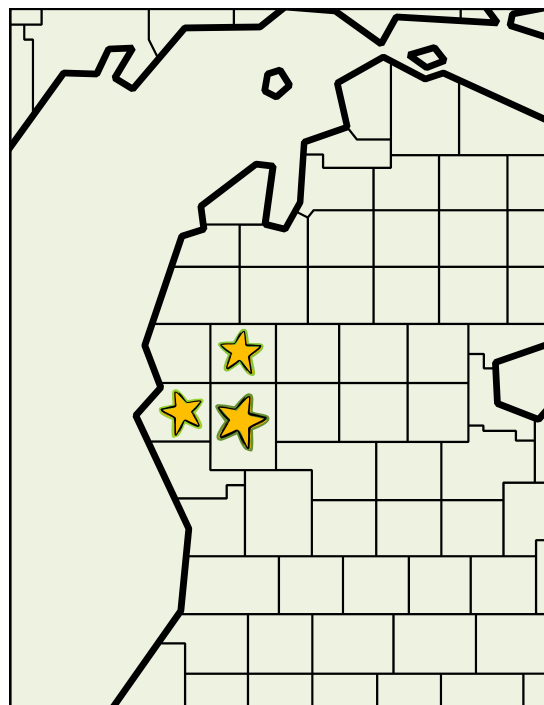


Local Voices. Lasting Impact.

Meet new and continued Community Champions

This spring, REACH Community Champions returned in Lake, Newaygo, and Oceana counties, with both returning and new Champions helping strengthen connections between REACH and the communities we serve. Champions bring valuable local perspectives to the work, helping identify community needs, share resources, and support efforts that make healthy choices more accessible across the region.

Together, our Community Champions help ensure REACH efforts are shaped not only for the communities we serve, but with them.



Safe Routes in Action

REACH supports safe and active travel for local students

REACH continued supporting Safe Routes to School efforts this spring, including participating in Bike & Roll to School Day activities in May.



REACHing Across Michigan

Highlighting local efforts at a statewide rural health meeting

Sharing REACH Beyond Our Communities, On April 22, REACH staff presented at the Rural Michigan Population Health Network Quarterly Meeting in Mt. Pleasant, sharing local work and experiences with public health partners from across rural Michigan.





Building Healthy Futures

HWYC celebrates Lake County's first cohort and looks ahead to Oceana County

Through continued collaboration between Corewell Health West and District Health Department #10 (DHD#10), the REACH team hosted the first Lake County Healthy Weight & Your Child (HWYC) cohort! Families participated in 15 weeks of engaging nutrition and physical activity programming, parent discussion, and class field trips to support healthy living, concluding with a graduation day on August 13th. Thank you to families who participated, along with the support of the YMCA of Muskegon, Baldwin Community Schools, the Pure Market Farmers & Makers Market, TrueNorth Community Services, Family Health Care, Pompeii's, Project Focus, Bombas, Save A Lot, and Angels of Action.



Celebrating Success: Lake County HWYC participants mark the completion of their 15-week program.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Building Momentum

Thank you to our health care partners and Community Health Workers (CHWs) from DHD#10, Trinity Health, Northwest Michigan Health Services Inc. (NWMHSI), Corewell Health, Family Health Care, and more!

COMING SOON

Also behind the scenes, Trinity Health Shelby and DHD#10 have been laying the groundwork for an upcoming HWYC cohort in Oceana County. Work has included identifying potential locations, developing and promoting outreach materials, coordinating advertising, and exploring incentives such as CSA produce boxes.

These efforts are helping build the partnerships and infrastructure needed to connect more families with the evidence-based program. The team is actively recruiting families and receiving referrals for a fall 2026 cohort!



Paving the Way for Walkability

Nationally recognized expert Mark Fenton headlines August workshop in Hart

REACH's partnerships around walkability and active transportation continued to grow in Oceana County this year. Conversations sparked by the 72nd Avenue and Polk Road roundabout helped strengthen REACH's connections with the Oceana County Road Commission and other community partners.

That momentum carried into a Community Walkability Workshop held August 24th in Hart, hosted by DHD#10 in partnership with Trinity Health Shelby. Nationally recognized public health, planning, and transportation expert Mark Fenton led residents and partners from across the state in exploring how community design can support walking, physical activity, and healthier communities.

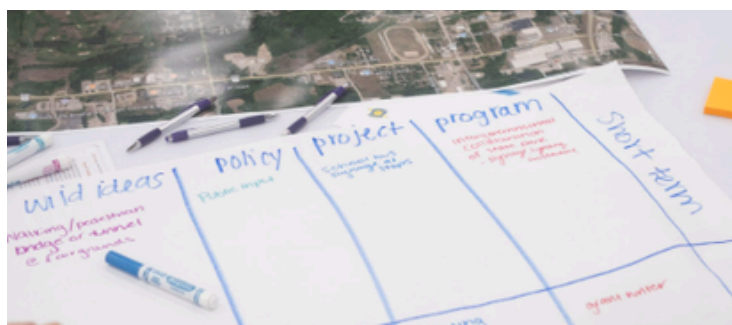


Mark Fenton engaging with participants in an understanding of walkability; what it is and why it is important for a robust community.

Paving the Way for Walkability Continued

Mark Fenton led the workshop, walking attendees through how walkability strengthens the connection between community, health, and economy, and showcasing innovative designs being used to boost walkability in neighborhoods across the country. From there, the group boarded a bus provided by Shelby Schools to tour the stretch of road under review firsthand. Back at the workshop, participants worked through short-term and long-term goals and ideas for improving walkability in the area.

Throughout the event, local media team Just Us Media was on hand capturing footage, along with a news journalist covering the workshop, stay tuned for a fuller recap of this community event.



In The Spotlight

The workshop drew local and statewide attention, highlighting the importance of walkability and community collaboration in improving health.

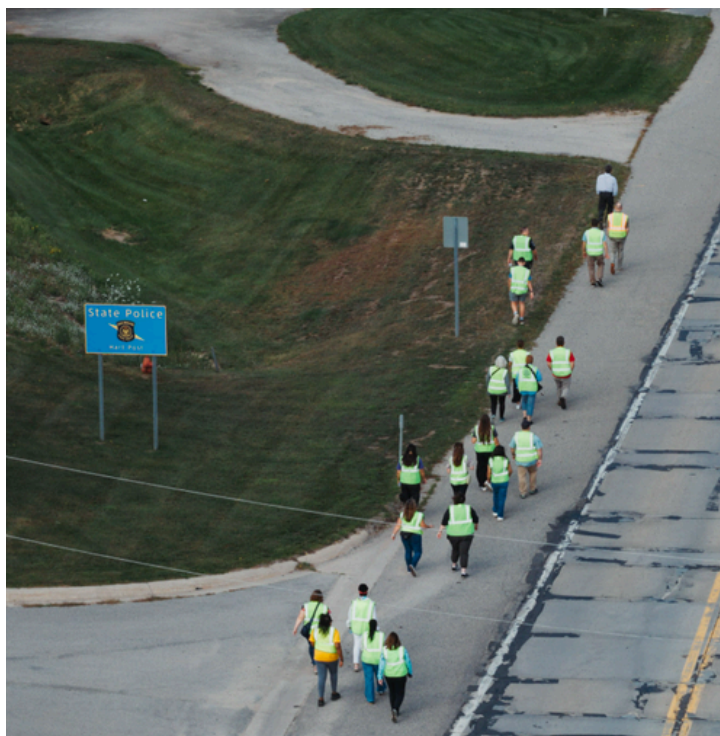


Thank You to Our Partners

REACH is grateful to Trinity Health Shelby, Shelby Public Schools, The Oceana County Road Commission, MDHHS, community residents, local officials, and partners across the state who continue to help build strong, healthier communities.

“If you are trying to encourage people to be more physically active every day, how their community is designed has much to do with it.”

-Mark Fenton





Growing Good Health

FARMacy Rx expands fresh food access in Lake County

The FARMacy Rx Program through the Pure Markette Farmers and Makers Market has expanded in its second year to serve 100 Lake County residents! Eligible patients facing chronic disease and social risk factors are screened and referred to the program by Family Health Care, attend educational programming and activities at the market, and are provided with vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables onsite! The Pure Markette Farmers and Makers Market offers additional programming, events, and demonstrations. Learn more here: <https://www.puremarkette.org/>.



A Fresh Connection

Digital benefits and new farm stands strengthen Senior Project Fresh

In collaboration with the Newaygo County Commission on Aging (COA), the REACH team supported the digitization of the Senior Project Fresh Program. The COA now provides eligible seniors digital benefits to purchase local fresh fruits and vegetables. Through REACH technical assistance, two farm stands in Newaygo County became authorized Senior Project Fresh retailers. For farmer or participant resources, visit: [Senior Project Fresh Program](#)



Healthy Weight & Your Child Billboards



FREE FAMILY HEALTH COACHING

Sign Up Today:
LIVEWELL4HEALTH.ORG

District Health Department #10

Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



FREE FAMILY HEALTH CLASS

Sign Up Today:
LIVEWELL4HEALTH.ORG

Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

GRATIS PROGRAMA DE SALUD FAMILIAR

Registrarse Ahora!

District Health Department #10

Rx Produce Program Flyer

WANTED

★ REFERRALS ★

Here's a reminder to refer 5 eligible patients to the Prescription (Rx) Produce Program by **May 27!**



HEALTH CONDITION

Lives with an uncontrolled chronic condition such as:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Other qualifying conditions



INSURANCE

Eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid



LOCATION

Lives in a Trinity Health-Shelby Priority ZIP Code



COMMITMENT

Able to pick up a CSA produce box each week



HIGH NEED

History of frequent hospital admissions or readmissions

★ SEEKING QUALIFIED REFERRALS ★

IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ON THIS:
PLEASE CALL 231-375-7244