**Rationale:** In 2014, a Harvard School of Public Health study revealed that your zip code is a greater predictor of your health than your genetic code. Poor health outcomes result in part from lack of access to affordable, healthful foods, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of preventable chronic disease. Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability, accounting for most of our nation’s healthcare costs at $2.5 trillion annually.

**Overview:** CSA Partnerships for Health provides a creative, engaging solution to improve food access and reduce disease by turning community health centers into vibrant neighborhood spaces that distribute food from local farms. This is accomplished by:

- Utilizing Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQHC lookalikes in the Portland area as weekly distribution sites for local CSA farmers
- Leveraging existing relationships between clinic patients and healthcare teams to enroll patients in the CSA program through vegetable “prescriptions”
- Subsidizing the cost of CSA shares to make them affordable to clinic patients while assuring that farmers receive fair compensation
- Offering education in cooking skills and nutrition while building social support networks to reinforce healthy eating habits

**History:** The program was created in 2015 after the Multnomah County Health Department’s Community Health Assessment revealed that the top barrier to self-management of chronic disease was lack of access to healthy fruits and vegetables. The 2015 pilot season enrolled 25 patients at the Mid County Health Center in collaboration with Zenger Farm. In 2018, the program will provide 251 households with CSA shares through 9 clinics in Portland area. Each site is supported by a different local farm.
**CSAP4H Model:** Participants are recruited by physicians, Community Health Workers, and other healthcare staff during regular office visits. Program participants are identified based on food insecurity, chronic disease conditions, and desire to improve their diet. Participants pay a “co-pay” of $5 per week in exchange for approximately $27 worth of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Each week from June – November, patients arrive at their home clinic to pick up fresh vegetables, taste healthy recipes, learn new ways to prepare produce, and build support networks that lead to improved health outcomes and a higher quality of life. The program supports individual health, the prosperity of our local food system, and seeks to work with insurers to one day provide coverage for fresh fruits and vegetables, just like prescription medication.

**Findings:** Program evaluation is led by Dr. Betty Izumi of the OSHU-PSU School of Public Health. The study design involves pre- and post-surveys for both intervention and comparison groups and measures the effectiveness of the CSA to clinic model at improving health behaviors among FQHC patients. Preliminary data has shown improvements in vegetable consumption, confidence in preparing and cooking vegetables, as well as improvements in social and emotional health.

“I am blessed being part of this program. My husband is the only one working and it’s very hard to cover all expenses. Having food on the table is not always that easy--especially organic, healthy food. I have health issues and I want to take of care myself so I can take care of my family. Thank you for doing this.”
-La Clinica de Buena Salud participant

“Without [this CSA], I most definitely couldn’t afford local or organic produce. I find that when I eat fresh, good quality food, that eating becomes an activity I’m more connected to. It becomes integrated into my daily routine in a new way, with new power.”
-OHSU Richmond participant

**2018 Partners:**

![Zenger Farm](image1)
![Multnomah County Health Department](image2)
![Village Gardens](image3)
![Kaiser Permanente](image4)
![The Wallace Medical Concern](image5)
![Mudbone Grown](image6)
![Portland State University Schoolyard Farms](image7)
![Bob’s Red Mill](image8)
![47 North Grant](image9)

**2018 Funders:**

![OHSU Knight Cancer Institute](image10)
![Kaiser Permanente](image11)
![USDA NIFA](image12)

**More information:**
Lauren Lubowicki
Program Manager
CSA Partnerships for Health
lauren@zengerfarm.org
(503) 282-4245 x102