

# Abbott Teams Up With The National Association Of Community Health Centers To Expand Access To Nutritious Food And Improve Health

- **Eight health centers across the U.S. participate in Innovation Incubator to find new ways to integrate healthy food into clinical care**
- **Now in its second year, the goal of the Innovation Incubator is to share what works with 1,400 health centers providing affordable care for 31+ million**

ABBOTT PARK, Ill. and BETHESDA, Md., June 20, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- The global healthcare company Abbott (NYSE: ABT) and the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) have joined together to increase access to healthy foods and improve health through the Innovation Incubator initiative. Eight community health centers have been selected to receive funding, expert guidance and training to design and test new solutions to help advance nutrition and improve care in their communities.

[One in eight](#) U.S. households (12.8%) experience food insecurity, or lack of access to an affordable, nutritious diet. [Studies show](#) that integrating nutritious food into clinical care can help address chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and/or heart disease. Now in its second year, the Innovation Incubator awardees will bring forward innovative ideas to help health centers across the country improve access to nutritious food as a part of a healthy lifestyle for their patients, regardless of their ZIP code or ability to pay for health services.

"Food insecurity severely impacts the health of underinvested communities," said NACHC President and CEO Kyu Rhee, MD, MPP. "We're thrilled to continue our collaboration with Abbott for the second year as the partner of choice in generating innovative solutions for population health. As the nation's largest primary care network, health centers' highly effective and innovative integrated model of care reaches beyond the walls of the traditional exam room to not only prevent illness but also address the social drivers that may cause poor health. Our focus this year is to create sustainable, effective strategies that solve food challenges and improve nutrition."

"Nutritious food is essential for good health, but far too often it's not available to people who need it," said Melissa Brotz, president of Abbott Fund and vice president, Global Marketing and External Affairs, Abbott. "We're excited to work together with NACHC and community health centers across the country to generate innovative and practical ideas to improve access to food, nutrition education and health services to help people live healthier lives."

## Innovating for Health Equity at Community Health Centers

As established, trusted institutions, community health centers play a crucial role in addressing health barriers for the people they serve. The aim of the Innovation Incubator is to support health centers in imagining, building and testing sustainable solutions for their unique populations – all with the broader goal of sharing what works with health centers nationwide to advance health access and equity.

Through a competitive process, health centers across the U.S. submitted their proposals and NACHC selected eight health centers to participate in this year's Innovation Incubator, focused on improving health equity through access to nutritious food. Projects include work across a number of areas, from creating community gardens and conducting nutrition education, to providing expectant mothers and people with chronic diseases with the customized nutrition they need. The eight health centers receiving funding through the 2024 Innovation Incubator initiative include:

- Affinia Healthcare, St. Louis
- Asian Health Services, Oakland, Calif.
- Cabin Creek Health Systems, Charleston, W. Va.
- Delaware Valley Community Health, Philadelphia
- White House Clinics, Richmond, Ky.
- Mainline Health Systems, Inc., Monticello, Ark.
- Tri-Area Community Health, Laurel Fork, Va.
- Urban Health Plan, New York

These health centers will develop and test new solutions over six months, putting the unique perspectives, experiences and challenges of their communities at the forefront. Centers will be supported by subject matter experts across diverse fields through individualized coaching and mentoring to help design and implement their projects.

Each center will be awarded \$30,000 and will have a chance to win one of two additional recognition awards at a live competitive pitch session in Fall 2024. NACHC will share the results with 1,400 health centers across the country, informing the care of more than 31 million patients.

"In response to higher rates of both food insecurity and chronic illnesses that can be better managed through healthier diets, Urban Health Plan and many of our community partners in the Bronx have prioritized making healthy food accessible to residents through food pantries, farmers markets, and regular food distribution events," said Paloma Izquierdo-Hernandez, president and CEO, Urban Health Plan. "That's why we're excited to be part of the Innovation Incubator. We're planning to bring in local chefs to help educate our community on preparing healthier meals with a focus on affordable and culturally relevant foods that can be found locally. With support from Abbott and NACHC, we aim to help our neighbors with chronic conditions like

diabetes and hypertension eat better and healthier."

## 2023 Incubator Impact

With funding support from Abbott, NACHC's [Center for Community Health Innovation](#) and other experts from across the organization launched the inaugural incubator in March 2023, with a focus on finding new ways to break down the "digital divide" in health by addressing key digital and health literacy challenges in communities. [Eight health centers](#) across the U.S. participated in the incubator, reaching more than 45,000 people with projects that included accessing telehealth care, understanding and using electronic registration and web portal tools, and meeting language and rural health needs.

### About Community Health Centers:

Since the nation's first Community Health Centers opened in 1965, expansion of the federally supported health center system to over 1,400 organizations created an affordable health care option for more than 31 million people. Health centers provide access to crucial and comprehensive primary care by reducing barriers such as cost, lack of insurance, distance, and language for their patients. In doing so, health centers — also called Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) — provide substantial benefits and cost-savings to the country and its health care system. For more information on their essential role in public health, visit [NACHC.org](#).

### About NACHC:

NACHC is the leading innovative change agent collaborating with affiliates and partners to advance Community Health Centers as the foundation of an equitable health care system free from disparities and built on accessible, patient-governed, high-quality, integrated primary care. For more information, visit [NACHC.org](#).

### About Abbott:

Abbott supports the Innovation Incubator as part of its broader work to innovate for greater access and affordability in health, the key priority of [Abbott's 2030 Sustainability Plan](#).

Through its businesses and in partnership with others, Abbott and its foundation Abbott Fund are investing in communities to help remove the barriers that prevent people from living healthy lives.

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