

# New Research Shows Even Stronger Health Outcomes For Participants In A 'Food Is Medicine' Program When Paired With Support From Community Health Workers

- Study at ADA's Scientific Sessions shows participants in Abbott's Healthy Food Rx program combined with health coaching had significant health improvements
- Abbott's Healthy Food Rx program is a Food is Medicine initiative delivering recipe-based food boxes and nutrition education to people living with diabetes

NEW ORLEANS, June 8, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- New research presented at the American Diabetes Association's 86<sup>th</sup> Scientific Sessions showed that adults living with type 2 diabetes participating in Abbott's (NYSE: ABT) Healthy Food Rx "Food is Medicine" program, paired with community health worker–led coaching, experienced major improvements in healthy eating, physical activity, diabetes self-management, food insecurity and self-reported physical and mental health.

Conducted with the Public Health Institute Center for Wellness and Nutrition (PHI CWN), the Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA) and the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin (EFB), and with funding from Abbott's philanthropic foundation Abbott Fund, the study assessed 284 participants living with type 2 diabetes who received Healthy Food Rx food boxes alongside community health worker–led coaching over a six-month period.

Key findings from the study revealed:

- **Improved diet quality:** Participants doubled daily vegetable intake (from 1.2 to 2.4 times per day) and nearly doubled daily fruit intake (from 1.2 to 2.3 times per day). Water intake also increased from 2.8 to 4.1 times per day.
- **Increased physical activity:** Participants significantly increased the frequency of exercise sessions lasting 10 or more minutes from 2.8 to 4.4 times per week.
- **Stronger diabetes self-management:** Participants significantly improved glucose monitoring, medication adherence and clinic attendance. Notably, the percentage of participants who reported they usually or always monitored their glucose increased from 28% to 62%, and individuals who usually or always took their diabetes medication as prescribed increased from 57% to 94%.
- **Better physical and mental health:** Those reporting good, very good or excellent physical health more than tripled from 21% to 77%, and those reporting good, very good or excellent mental health more than doubled from 34% to 88%.
- **Reduced food insecurity:** Food insecurity decreased significantly from 91% to 76% for program participants.

"This research adds to the evidence supporting Food is Medicine and adds new insight on the significant impact that community-centered approaches can have on diabetes care," said Maggie Wilkin, director of research and evaluation, Public Health Institute Center for Wellness and Nutrition. "These findings show that pairing healthy food access with culturally responsive, patient-centered coaching can help people feel better physically and mentally."

"Abbott's Healthy Food Rx program shows what's possible when people receive not only healthy food, but also encouragement and coaching from someone they trust who understands their daily realities," said Melissa Brotz, senior vice president, Global Marketing and External Affairs, Abbott and president of Abbott Fund. "Food is Medicine is most powerful when it combines healthy food access with the knowledge, confidence and support people need to manage their health."

"Many people with diabetes face real-world challenges in getting the care and support they need to live healthy. Community health workers can play a powerful role in helping people manage chronic illness because they bring trust, understanding and consistency to the work," said David Daraseng, project coordinator, APSARA.

## About the study

Study participants received home-delivered, family-sized healthy food boxes every other week for six months from EFB, along with health coaching in their preferred language from APSARA. Each Healthy Food Rx box included ingredients for healthy family meals such as pantry staples, proteins, fruits and vegetables, along with a recipe card and access to optional online cooking classes with diabetes education. Community health workers co-created and delivered monthly lessons and conducted twice-monthly follow-ups to support goal setting, motivation and diabetes self-management.

The study evaluation was conducted over two six-month rounds, examining changes in diet, physical activity, food security, diabetes self-management and self-reported health before and after participation. Full study results can be found [here](#).

## About Abbott's Healthy Food Rx

These findings build on results from other Healthy Food Rx studies. An earlier [12-month study](#) showed clinically significant improvements for participants, with lower A1C levels and improved diabetes self-management, overall diet quality and food security, and a [randomized controlled trial](#) demonstrated improved diet and self-reported health among participants.

Abbott's Healthy Food Rx is one of the largest community-focused Food is Medicine programs in the U.S., reaching 2,100 participants to date. Abbott partnered with PHI CWN and Stockton-based organizations to launch Healthy Food Rx with funding from Abbott Fund.

Healthy Food Rx is part of Abbott's [Future Well™ Communities](#) program, a multi-year effort launched in 2019 to advance health

access and address chronic disease by removing barriers that prevent people from living fuller lives through better health.

#### **About the Public Health Institute and the Center for Wellness and Nutrition**

The Public Health Institute, an independent nonprofit organization, advances wellbeing and health equity with communities around the world. PHI develops research, leadership and partnerships to build strong public health policy, programs, systems and practices. For more information, visit [phi.org](http://phi.org). The Center for Wellness and Nutrition (CWN, [centerforwellnessandnutrition.org](http://centerforwellnessandnutrition.org)), a program of the Public Health Institute, is a national leader in developing campaigns, programs and partnerships to promote wellness and equitable practices in the most vulnerable communities in California and across the country.

#### **About APSARA**

The Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA) is a grassroots nonprofit community-based organization serving Stockton, CA communities, with a focus on Southeast Asian populations as well as African American and Latino residents. APSARA provides community-based education, case management and support services that help individuals and families improve health and wellbeing.

#### **About the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin**

The Emergency Food Bank Stockton/San Joaquin (EFB), founded in 1968, is the largest direct provider of emergency food in San Joaquin County. The mission of the Emergency Food Bank is to build a stronger community by providing a safety net of healthy food, nutrition education and hope to residents of San Joaquin County who find themselves in need. For more information, visit [stocktonfoodbank.org](http://stocktonfoodbank.org).

#### **About Abbott and Abbott Fund**

Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 122,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries. Together with our foundation, Abbott Fund, we partner with trusted organizations to build programs that strengthen care, improve access and help families and communities thrive. We're committed to building a healthier future by inspiring lifelong habits that support well-being and help to prevent chronic disease for generations to come. Connect with us at [Abbott.com](http://Abbott.com) and on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).

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