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A Brief Overview of Food Insecurity in Southern New Jersey

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Background

- Food insecurity is divided into two categories:¹
 - Low food security: reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet but does not usually involve reduced food intake.
 - Very low food security: multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.
- As of 2020, 8.4% of New Jersey households experienced some level of food insecurity.^{2,4}
- Food insecure individuals are more likely to have hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic health problems.³

Objective

Interview stakeholders, including members from Rowan-Virtua SOM The Shop, Food Bank of South Jersey, Spanish Community Center, and local physicians, to identify and examine barriers and disparities related to food insecurity.

Methods

- A literature review was conducted using sources from PubMed, Feeding America and local government reports from New Jersey state departments.
- Keywords included: food insecurity, southern New Jersey, food deserts, food pantry, nutrition.

Results



Figure 1. NJCA map of New Jersey's designated food deserts.⁵

- There are different segregated initiatives addressing food insecurity in New Jersey, led by various public and private institutions.²
- However, an integrated and collaborative strategy involving local agencies and community groups has greater chances of improving access to healthy food, particularly for underserved communities.²

Conclusion

- Food insecurity is prevalent within southern New Jersey, affecting citizen's health and wellbeing.
- Reducing food insecurity and creating sustainable solutions requires integrating the knowledge and expertise of invested community leaders.

Proposed Intervention

- Partner with Rowan-Virtua Community Health Center to promote patient education on food insecurity.
 - Prepare handouts about eating healthy on a budget and shopping on a budget
 - Create handouts providing details on SNAP requirements for south New Jersey and on local resources such as the Virtua Health mobile grocery store

References

Scan the QR code to access references.

