

# Crain's

## **Bronx Food Program Funded by DSRIP Expands Access**

By: Jennifer Henderson

OneCity Health, the New York City Health + Hospitals performing provider system under the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program, said Wednesday that its Bronx-based nutrition program has helped address food insecurity and has been cost-effective while doing so.

The program—led by Manhattan-based nonprofit Public Health Solutions—has provided screening and navigation to community resources for food-insecure patients at H+H's Jacobi and Lincoln campuses. By incorporating food security specialists in health care settings, OneCity Health said, the program can connect patients with nutrition services without the fragmentation and lack of coordination that often impede such efforts.

During a 10-month period that began last November, Public Health Solutions helped to register 871 families for nutrition services, OneCity Health said. Nearly 60% of participants screened were enrolled in one or more services such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. The proportion of families in need of emergency food resources who were able to access those resources increased to 56% from 6%.

OneCity Health said that based on research, the average estimated savings associated with SNAP enrollment is about \$1,400 per enrollee per year, and more than \$9,000 per year when associated with medically tailored home-delivered meals.

"Because the social safety net is very fragmented and often uncoordinated, we really wanted to make sure there was an effective connection between the health and the community resources that were available," said Zach Hennessey, vice president of neighborhood health at Public Health Solutions.

Public Health Solutions received about \$704,000 from the \$5 million total allocated for OneCity Health's innovation fund. The fund's goals include implementing programs that target DSRIP priorities such as reducing avoidable hospitalizations and addressing social factors associated with poor health, OneCity Health said.

"This is a powerful program," said Israel Rocha, CEO of OneCity Health and vice president of H+H. It's representative of the change in the way health care works that has been envisioned in DSRIP, he added.

Collaboration on the program is something OneCity Health hopes to replicate with expansions into additional H+H facilities and measurement of clinical care outcomes, Rocha said.

Other partners in the program include BronxWorks, God's Love We Deliver, the Food Bank for New York City and Healthfirst. —Jennifer Henderson