

# Expanding Food Access & Improving Nutrition Education Through a Food Pharmacy

*Redwood Community Health Coalition  
Promising Practice*

## PROMISING PRACTICE OVERVIEW

Two years ago Marin City Health & Wellness Center (MCHWC) started a Food Pharmacy at their Marin City clinic, in an effort to highlight the connection between physical health and nutrition. After several young men in the community died too young from strokes, the clinic knew they needed to work with the community to improve nutrition. The Food Pharmacy began and has grown to include not only free food, but nutrition education, a collaborative learning environment, and optional billable provider visits.

The Food Pharmacy is now at both the Marin City and San Francisco clinic locations, increasing food access for patients weekly. MCHWC works with one cohort of patients at a time for 12 weeks and tracks specific health measures to analyze changes over time. Participants are incentivized to continue the program with prizes along the way.

## AIM

To increase access to and consumption of fresh healthy food, and improve nutrition education, among health center patients.

## DATA

Data Collected	Summary of Data /Additional Information
Number of patients enrolled in each cohort	Average around 40 patients (also the approximate number that attend each week)
Demographic information of the cohorts	Mostly females age 40 and older; mix of white, black, and Latinx patients.
Attendance rate of participants in cohort	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At 6 week halfway mark, participants get an apron if they've attended each week</li> <li>2. At 12 week finale, participants that attended at least 10 of 12 weeks get a prize (e.g. rice cooker or immersion blender) and receive a certificate of completion</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial assessment of food security, food access, and general feeling of health</li> <li>2. Exit survey to reassess food security, food access, and general feeling of health</li> </ol>	For completing the initial food assessment, participants receive a reusable grocery bag for taking home their food each week.
Blood pressure and blood sugar measurements for each patient weekly by either clinic medical assistants (MAs) or Dominican University students	Readings are informal measurements to help participants see the link between what they're eating and changes in blood pressure and blood sugar. The program has seen small decreases in blood pressure so far, however readings have only been regularly taken for the past three cohorts.

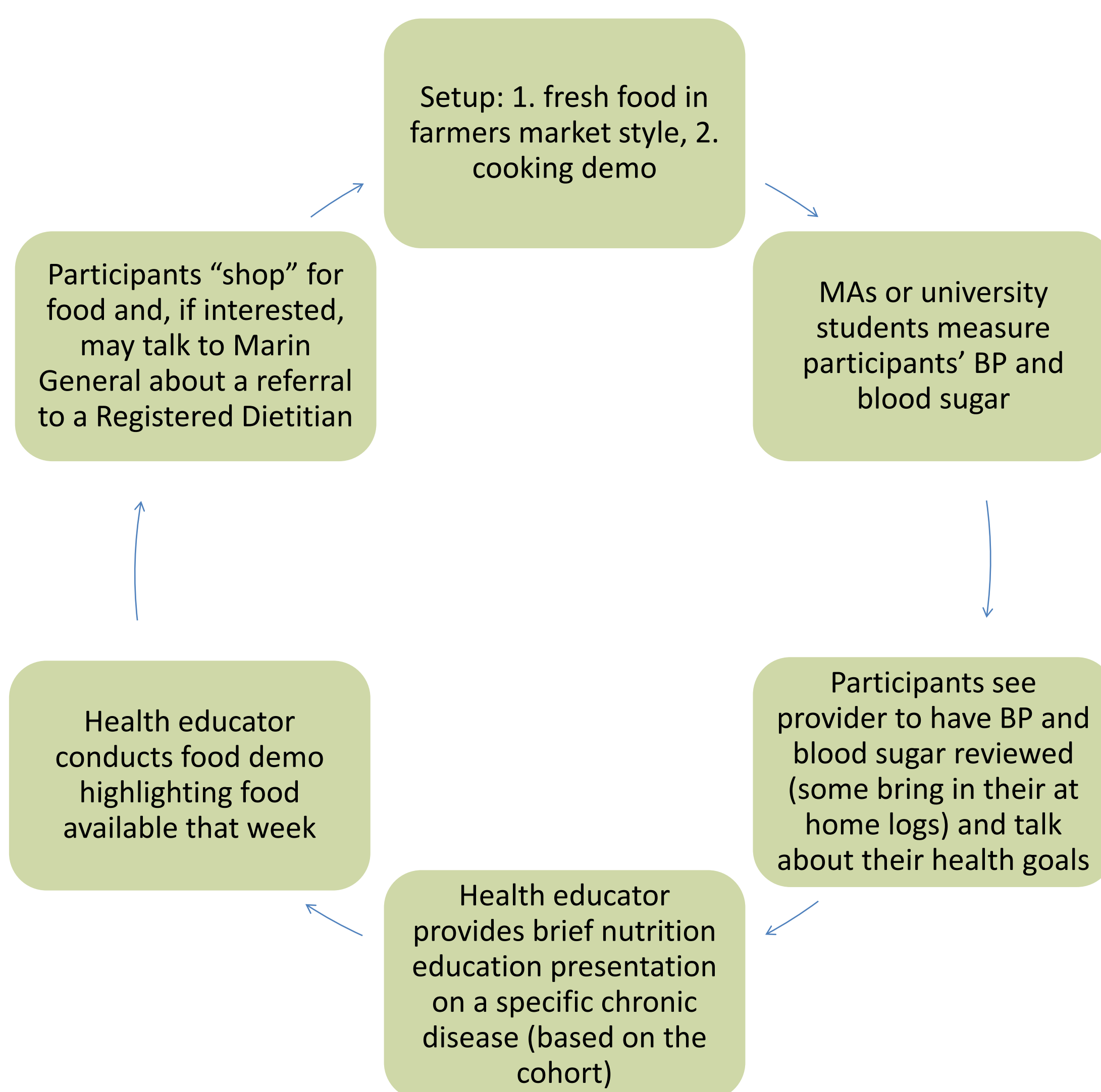
## RESULTS TO DATE

The Marin City clinic is currently working with its seventh cohort of patients. The clinic has been collecting thorough health data (such as blood pressure and blood sugar) for three cohorts now, and have seen some slight decreases in blood pressure. Participants are generally satisfied with the produce selection and are always willing to try the food at the cooking demos. The food is culturally appropriate, however more dark leafy greens (e.g. Swiss chard and collards) would be great.

## ACTIONS TAKEN

- Formed partnership with the SF Marin Food Bank to provide free weekly fresh fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains, and secured funding from the Marin Community Foundation for staff time and supplies
- Designed program components such as nutrition education presentations and healthy cooking demos
- Worked with providers to begin referring patients to the program by giving out a Rx and internally messaging program staff
- Designed patient outreach strategies including sending postcards to referred patients 1 month before program start and sending text message reminders through eCW

## WEEKLY PROGRAM WORKFLOW



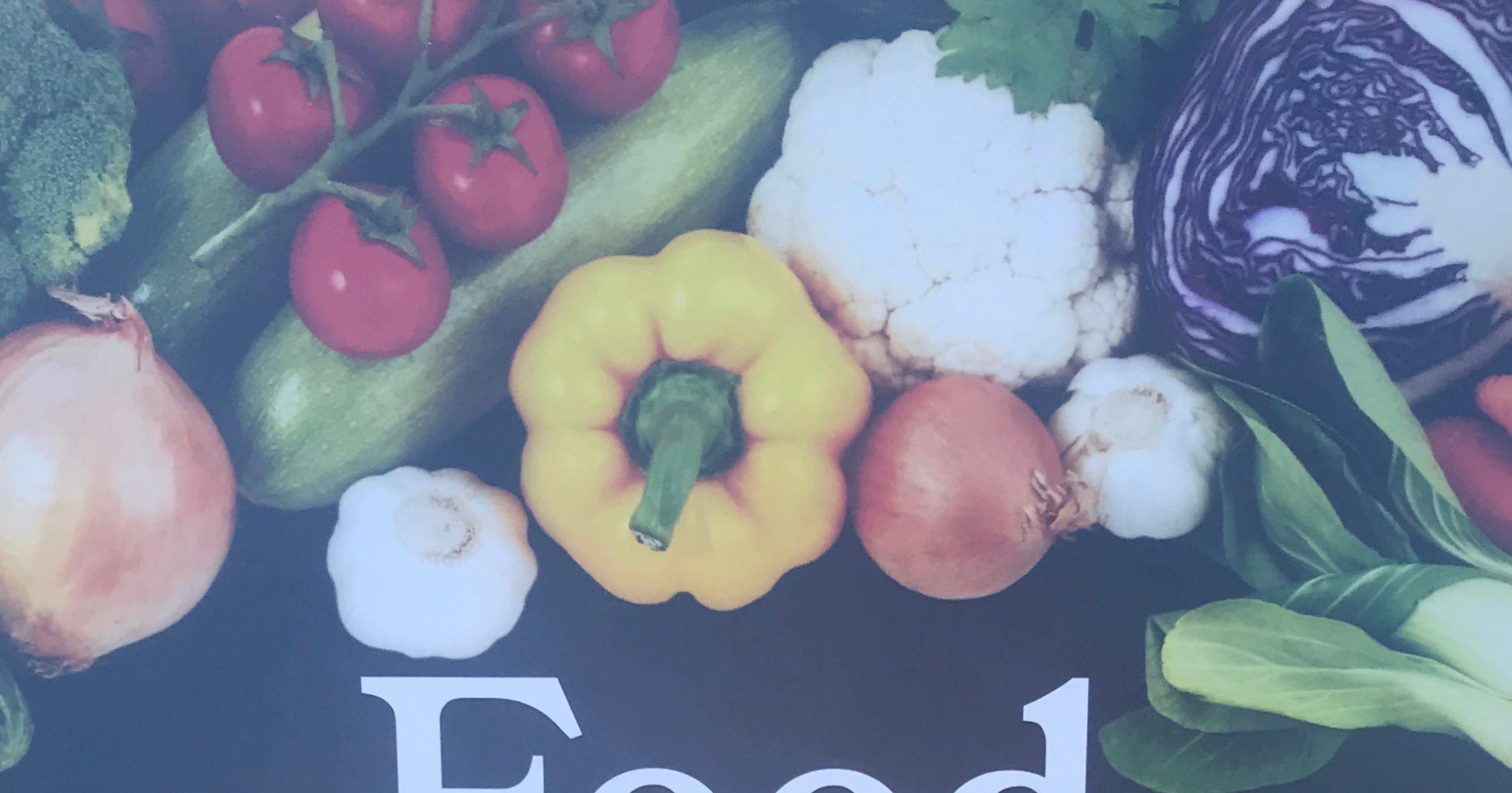
Want to see the program in action and hear from a participant?  
[Watch MCWHC on KRON-TV4](#)

## NEXT STEPS

MCHWC will continue to work on 1. patient recruitment and retention for the food pharmacy, 2. building a diverse funding stream to ensure long-term sustainability, 3. growing the new SF program, and 4. getting more buy-in and participation at the community level to make weekly events like “health fairs”.

MCHWC looks forward to building their dataset over time to better understand changes in patient health over the course of the program. Their new SF food pharmacy has a provider present each week, however it's been more challenging to have someone at Marin City's. They will continue to work on this.



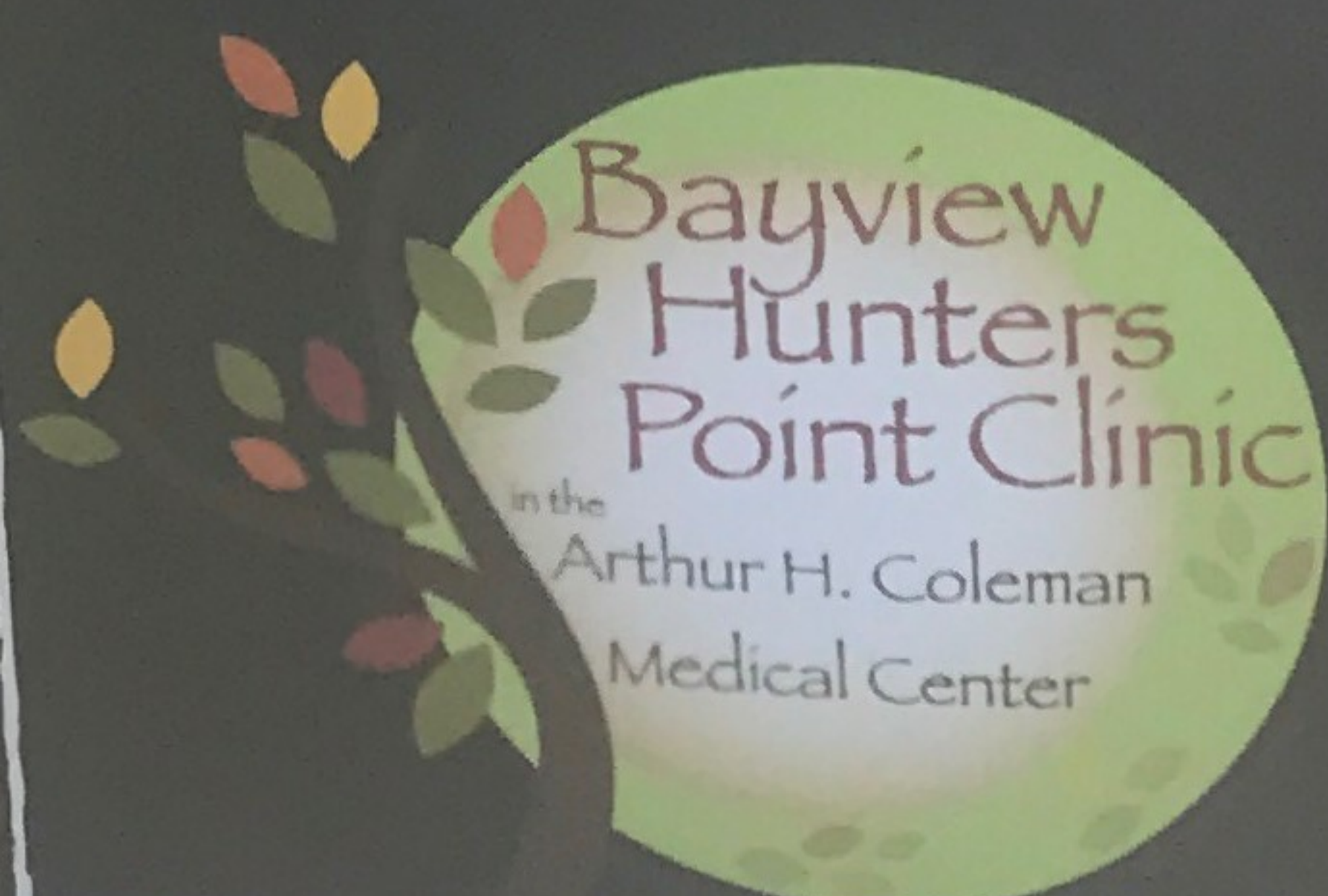


# Food Pharmacy

Open Today!

FREE

Fresh Groceries, Health Checks,  
& Nutrition Presentations







FALL 2018

## Our Donors Make HEAL Programs Possible



**D**iane Tarlecki, MCHWC patient and board member, recently cooked a meal on KRON-TV4 using food and recipes from our weekly Food Pharmacy. "It's healthier eating because I live on a limited income, and it gives me a chance to use fresh produce without the cost of a grocery store." **Watch the story online at [marincityclinic.org/foodpharmacy](http://marincityclinic.org/foodpharmacy).**

Our Food Pharmacy prescribes fruits and vegetables, rather than pills, as nature's cure to alleviate ailments. It is part of the clinic's free Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) programs, which are funded entirely by donors like you.

"Last year, Marin City lost four individuals to heart attacks and stroke, so we launched the Food Pharmacy to help create heart health," said Michaela Moss, Health Educator. **"We provide patients with fresh food and connect them to healthy recipes in a fun environment."** Diane believes that the Food Pharmacy has benefited her life, improving her health to enjoy her seven grandchildren.

**A gift of \$250 funds one week of the Food Pharmacy.** We thank the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank and the Marin Community Foundation for their very generous support of this program.

**To attend or volunteer at the weekly Food Pharmacy, contact Michaela at 415.339.8813 x125 or [mmoss@marincityclinic.org](mailto:mmoss@marincityclinic.org).**

### Free HEAL Activities in Marin City

<b>Monday</b>	9-11am	Senior Food Pantry
	10-11am	5k Training Group
<b>Tuesday</b>	9-11am	Art Class
	11am-12pm	Healing Colors
	3-4pm	Food Pharmacy
<b>Wednesday</b>	12-1pm	Community Lunch
	1:30-2:30pm	Sit Fit Chair Yoga
	4-5pm	5k Training Group
<b>Thursday</b>	9-10am	Talk and Walk
	1-2pm	Easy Hike

*More at [marincityclinic.org/events](http://marincityclinic.org/events)*



**Position Title:** Health Educator  
**Department:** Corporate Outreach  
**Reports To:** Chief Medical Officer

**Location:** Marin City  
**FLSA Status:** Non-Exempt  
**Revised Date:** 07-2019

**Summary:**

The Health Educator will provide health education and counseling to the Marin City Health and Wellness Center's (MCHWC) patients and their families, coordinate the MCHWC's role in the Park Prescription Program, and oversee Healthy Eating, Active Living programs, including MCHWC's Food Pharmacy. The Health Educator will also collect and analyze data to identify patient and community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programs designed to encourage healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments.

**Essential Duties and Responsibilities:**

The Health Educator's primary responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Educating and counseling the MCHWC patients who seek one-on-one nutrition and chronic condition counseling.
- Utilize motivational interviewing strategies to construct individual patient treatment plans, and coordinating regular follow-up.
- Scheduling appointments with patients who have been referred by the MCHWC Providers for health education.
- Entering patient data and treatment plans into the electronic health record.
- Constructing individual patient treatment plans that promote health improvement, and complement medical care – such as menu planning, exercise regimens, meditation, etc.
- Coordinating and facilitating activities for the MCHWC patients who participate in the Park Prescription program. This includes, but is not limited to, regular hikes with the GGNRA and overseeing the Sit Fit class.
- Designing monthly public health campaigns that correlate with monthly health initiatives. This includes designing patient education boards and collaterals, outreaching to the MCHWC patients and the community in general, and organizing patient groups to provide education.
- Representing MCHWC at all required grant meetings, including but not limited to County of Marin taskforce meetings (Food Now, ParksRx and other workgroups, taskforces and subcommittees as needed) to ensure collaboration with Nutrition Wellness Program and Heal Partners.
- Ensuring MCHWC meets intended grant deliverables per approved timelines, tracks data and conveys relevant information in monthly, mid-term and final reports.
- Managing a data collection process to include monthly data collection into LiveStories or other Marin County data collection tools; co-create surveys with the support of the County's Epi team; administer patient surveys and collect data on a weekly basis to submit with monthly County reports. Collecting and analyzing patient data for the MCHWC patients who are referred for health education.
- Monitoring all work plans and timelines associated with grant funding.
- Working closely with supervising staff and other relevant parties to coordinate all activities integral to patient billing.
- Conducting outreach, attending health fairs and community events on behalf of the MCHWC.
- Punctuality, regular and reliable attendance.
- Performs other duties as directed, developed or assigned.

**Supervisory Responsibility:** N/A

**Qualification Requirements:****Education and/or Experience:**

- Bachelor's degree in health education, or a related field.
- Experience as a health educator
- Knowledge of the Microsoft Office program (Excel, Power Point, Word)
- The ability to create and organize systems of work and programs
- Strong communication (oral and written) and organizational skills.
- Knowledge of standard office policies and procedures
- Must have a positive attitude, be a team player, and be able to take directions from supervisor
- Understands and promote the mission, vision, and values of the health center both in the workplace and in the community
- Sensitivity to the needs and situation of multi-cultural population from a variety of income levels
- Ability to manage multiple tasks
- Excellent customer service skills and ability to effectively and respectfully handle dissatisfied patients
- Experience in a medical office setting/FQHC setting

**Language Skill:**

- Must possess excellent organization, writing, and verbal skills
- English proficiency required; Spanish proficiency preferred

**Reasoning ability:**

- Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.

**Equipment/Machinery:** Fax machine, copier, personal computer, telephone, calculator, Microsoft Word/Excel, EHR system, and other software as required.

**Physical Demands:** The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an individual to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

1. Stand and walk or sit alternatively depending on specific needs of day. Estimate 30% of time is spent on feet and 70% sitting at desk.
2. Have occasional need to perform the following physical activities: bend/stoop/squat, climb stairs, push or pull, reach above shoulders.
3. Have occasional need to perform standing and walking activities.
4. Constant need to perform the following physical activities: writing/typing, grasping/turning, finger dexterity.
5. Lifting/carrying over 10 pounds occasionally. Lifting/carrying less than 10 pounds frequently.
6. Vision requirements: constant need to complete forms, read reports, view computer screen. Frequent need to see small detail. Frequent need to see things clearly beyond arm's reach.
7. Hearing requirements: constant need to communicate over telephone and in person.

**Travel Requirements:** Occasional need to utilize personal transportation to conduct site visits, and attend meetings.

**Work Environment:**

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

**I have read, understand, and voluntarily commit myself to the general guidelines contained in this document. I also understand that this is only a basic description of my job, and it does not, nor is it intended to, outline all of the specifics of the responsibilities that I will be expected to perform. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.**



**Employee signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

