

Overview of Proposed Strategies and Activities

REACH is a national program administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities among populations with the highest burden of chronic disease (hypertension, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and obesity) by addressing preventable risk behaviors (diet and physical activity). CARE will coordinate and build coalitions, with residents and community partners across New Haven, to implement activities and ultimately, advance health equity. CARE places special emphasis on working with low-income communities of color. CDC requires strategies and specific actions, outlined below, in three distinct areas: community-clinical linkages, nutrition, and physical activity.

COMMUNITY-CLINICAL LINKAGES

CDC Requirements:

- *Collaborate with partners to increase referral and access to community-based health programs.*
- *Promote the use of appropriate and locally available programs.*
- *Expand the use of health professionals such as Community Health Workers to increase referral to appropriate and locally available health and preventive care programs.*

New Haven Health Leaders: New Haven Health Leaders (NHHL) is a leadership program that trains New Haven residents and SCSU students from New Haven to build support for neighborhood-focused, resident-led health promotion projects. NHHL will be empowered to mobilize communities to increase access to health programs and initiatives. NHHL will focus on New Haven's six low-income neighborhoods with two residents and one student working within each neighborhood per year, for a total of 90 trained Health Leaders in five years.

Community Health Workers: CARE will facilitate linkages to clinical and community programs by expanding the use of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in community settings, such as food pantries. CARE and Project Access-New Haven will work with partners and develop culturally and linguistically accessible resources, services, and supports. To expand capacity of CHWs, CARE will design a CHW Student Internship program offered to SCSU students to support CHWs.

Additionally, CARE will support a CHW Coordinator to bridge gaps and synergize efforts among programs. The CHW Coordinator will reach across organizations to enhance advocacy, efficiency, organizing, training, and resources for community health. Lastly, CARE will work with Gateway Community College, its sister institution, as they revamp their CHW certificate program to meet new state certification standards.

Information Sharing: NHHL and CHWs will be instrumental in promoting programs. CARE will work with community partners to maximize the use of current online resource lists and databases and to create culturally appropriate outreach materials and communication systems that NHHL and CHWs will use to promote health programs.

NUTRITION

CDC Requirements:

- Collaborate with partners to improve nutrition.
- Work with food vendors, distributors and producers to establish/support food hubs.
- Establish healthy nutrition standards in key institutions, such as food banks/pantries.
- Make improvements to local programs/systems.
- Increase continuity of care/community support for breastfeeding.

SWAP - Supporting Wellness at Pantries: SWAP is a nutrition ranking system, developed by Foodshare, the University of Saint Joseph, and the UCONN Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, to promote healthy options at food pantries by ranking healthy vs. unhealthy foods with a simple stoplight system. With support from CARE food access interns, pantry directors and key volunteers will be trained to categorize donations, physically re-structure the pantry, and inform future food purchasing guidelines.

Increasing healthy food donations to pantries through #GiveHealthy: Donating canned goods and other non-perishable items to food drives is one of the most popular forms of giving in the United States. However, many of these foods are highly processed, unhealthy foods. #GiveHealthy increases healthy donations through online food drives matched to pantries' needs.

Providing health education and resource referrals through CHWs: CARE will leverage the healthy food make-over of pantries with the integration of CHWs. Through direct referrals, CHWs will provide pantry clients with support and connection to clinical care and health-related programs and resources.

Streamline emergency food assistance system: Organize with emergency food programs, residents, and other partners to address gaps and barriers to the current food system, implementing a strategic plan and action steps to streamline services and promote access to programs.

Food Hub New Haven: CARE will be a partner in an innovative initiative on the cusp of execution, Food Hub New Haven, to provide increased access to healthy food. The City of New Haven is currently piloting a food business incubation program with rising food entrepreneurs, run by CitySeed. Simultaneously, CitySeed and two other food- and health-related organizations – the New Haven Land Trust and New Haven Farms – have been developing a plan to co-locate current activities and create a model food, farming, conservation, and food business development program. Food Hub New Haven will host activities of the three non-profits, the business incubation program, a community kitchen, a food and agriculture resource center, an urban farm, and a retail space for selling local, healthy foods.

New Haven Healthy Start Lactation Specialist: The Lactation Specialist, a trained CHW, will: (1) increase the number of certified lactation specialists by training other CHWs, (2) increase lactation training programs available to parents, and (3) promote available lactation support services.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

CDC Requirements:

- Collaborate with partners to improve physical activity to connect sidewalks, paths, bicycle routes, and public transit through implementing master plans.

In partnership with the City of New Haven Transportation, Traffic, and Parking Department, CARE will improve access to physical activity with emphasis in low-income neighborhoods by: (1) prioritizing resident input for improvements to active transportation (walking, biking) through community forums, (2) supporting the development of a Master Plan that reflects resident priorities, (3) advocating for transportation, environmental design, and land use improvements through community mobilizing, and (4) promoting physical activity options to residents.