



HEALTHY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HCHC Partners with The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to Offer On-Site Food Pharmacy

HARRISONBURG, VA (August 14, 2023)— HCHC is collaborating with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to address food insecurity and promote the connection between health and nutrition. Through a new on-site food pantry located in HCHC Pharmacy, patients at HCHC experiencing food insecurity now have a low-barrier option to access food resources to help meet their health and cultural needs.

“Healthy Communities Health Center is the first Federally Qualified Health Center to become a Food Pharmacy partner, and that’s something to celebrate,” said Maria Bowman, Director of Health Initiatives at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. “Given HCHC’s mission to support individuals who are uninsured and underinsured, accessibility for diverse patient populations, and comprehensive ‘medical home model,’ they are an ideal Food Pharmacy partner. Operating with a directive in our new strategic plan to improve the health of our guests, the Food Bank will continue to prioritize partnerships like this one that connect individuals with the nutrition they need in convenient, accessible, and trusted environments.”

HCHC’s partnership with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is an extension of their patient-centered medical home model (PCMH) that views health more broadly than a medical diagnosis. PCMH focuses on the whole person and acknowledges how social and economic factors impact health outcomes and overall well-being. The Food Pharmacy program aims to provide nutritious food to patients in real-time without stigma or judgment, helping them manage chronic diseases, prevent illness, and support an active, healthy lifestyle.

Since opening to patients on July 24, 2023, 144 HCHC patients have been supplied with groceries. The food pantry is stocked with shelf-stable foods and fresh produce delivered from the Food Bank, along with produce and eggs from HCHC staff gardens and farms. An HCHC team member assists patients accessing the pantry to ensure they receive food items that support their health needs.

HCHC’s Food Pharmacy Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting will take place on Thursday, August 17, at 9:00 a.m. Supported by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce, the brief ribbon-cutting ceremony will include remarks from HCHC Food Pharmacy Project Champions Erin Frazier, RN, Director of Clinical Operations, and Dr. Jeff Domingus, DO. Representatives of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank will be present, as well as Anthem Healthkeepers, who generously donated the refrigerator to store perishable items. The Food Pharmacy is located within HCHC Pharmacy at 1380 Little Sorrell Drive in Harrisonburg. Media representatives are invited to attend.

About HCHC

Founded in 2007, HCHC’s mission is to provide patient-centered healthcare that is accessible and affordable for all. **Over 14,000 area neighbors seek their healthcare services at HCHC.** As a nonprofit healthcare organization, HCHC aims to ensure that affordable, high-quality primary healthcare services

are made available to all residents of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, including family medicine, pediatrics, behavioral health, women's health, dental services, HIV/AIDS care management, pharmacy services, and more.

HCHC provides care at the following locations in the Valley:

- Stone Port on Little Sorrell Dr. in Harrisonburg (primary care, pediatrics, behavioral health, pharmacy, and dental services)
- Park View at VMRC in Harrisonburg (primary care, pediatrics, and behavioral health)
- Elkton in the Shen Elk Plaza (primary care, pediatrics, and behavioral health)
- Care Management services site on Water Street in Harrisonburg (for those living with HIV/AIDS).

With donor support and as a federally qualified health center (FQHC), HCHC makes health care possible for a wide range of individuals and families that would not otherwise have access to quality medical care. HCHC strives to be a "medical home" for its patients so that health and well-being are a priority in our community. HCHC accepts most major insurances and offers discounts to its patients based on household income. At HCHC, no patient is ever denied care because of income or insurance status. All are welcome to choose HCHC as their medical home! For complete information on HCHC, log on to www.hburgchc.org.

About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and Food Pharmacy

Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Verona, Virginia, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. The Food Bank serves an average of 127,500 people per month across 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. We're serving record numbers of Virginians through our network of more than 400 community partners, which includes food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, libraries, healthcare clinics, community centers, and more. We pledge to continue innovating and adapting to secure, store, and distribute more food to more individuals, families, children, and seniors experiencing hunger. The Food Bank is a partner food bank of Feeding America®, a national association supporting more than 200 food banks across the United States, helping provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people through 60,000 agency partners. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.

Food Pharmacy is a Food Bank program offering food in a healthcare setting to help meet patients' nutritional needs. The Food Pharmacy program regularly provides food insecurity screenings for patients, coordinated with and supported by healthcare partners. Referrals to nutritious, on-site food resources are available to anyone who meets the income guidelines. The Food Bank has 19 Food Pharmacy sites at regional hospital systems, free clinics, and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

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