

Capital BlueCross Community Care Project Promotes Wellness and Nutrition through Harrisburg Food Pantry



Community Care Project kickoff

Capital BlueCross is partnering with the Hamilton Health Center, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, and Derry Street United Methodist Church to help people in need get important health screenings, while receiving fresh, nutritious food. It will raise awareness and educate at-risk populations on the importance of prevention, early diagnosis, and management of chronic diseases.

The Community Care project allows people to be screened by a medical professional when they visit the food pantry at the Derry Street United Methodist Church in Harrisburg. The project's goal is to assist underserved communities, where many are uninsured, and chronic diseases are prevalent. It aims to help people improve their overall health through access to nutritious food, healthcare and education.

This unique collaboration is designed to help people detect health issues before they become more serious. The screenings, conducted by the Hamilton Health Center, include blood pressure and glucose. They will be available twice a month during food distribution days. Participation is voluntary.

"As a community-based health insurer, helping those in need in our community is part of our mission. We know that having access to fresh food has a positive impact on overall health," said Susan Hubley, Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility, Capital BlueCross. "We are proud to partner with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and Hamilton Health Center to educate residents in the Allison Hill neighborhood about healthy living, and to provide them with access to important health screenings that they may otherwise go without."

Through Capital BlueCross' support, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is providing fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables to the food pantry. The company's health coaches and dietitians will also be in attendance to provide wellness information and answer questions.

"We are very excited about our innovative partnership with Capital BlueCross, Hamilton Health Center, and Derry Street United Methodist Church to bring healthy food assistance, education, and healthcare together to benefit food-insecure residents," said Joe Arthur, Executive Director of Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. "This is game-changing work that we believe will truly help clients achieve better health outcomes."

Throughout the project, health data will be collected so those who participate can track their progress. If a health issue is detected, they will receive guidance, and will be connected with providers who can help them manage their condition.

"Identifying health issues early and providing healthy foods are two important ways of improving a community's health. This partnership was established specifically for that purpose," said Jeannine Peterson, CEO of Hamilton Health Center. "With healthcare workers available where food is being distributed, our most vulnerable residents can receive health screenings, and be connected to care to address their health concerns."

The food distribution and health screenings take place bi-monthly. During each distribution, a specific healthcare theme will be highlighted. As part of National Dental Hygiene Month, Capital BlueCross today distributed dental kits including a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss. Research shows that dental health is closely tied to overall wellness. Future themes may include diabetes and osteoporosis prevention, early cancer detection, and heart disease and cholesterol basics.