The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund was designated by the Vermont Legislature in 2009 to serve as the administrator of Farm to Plate with the aim of strengthening Vermont’s food system over ten years. In 2019, the Legislature reauthorized another ten years of Farm to Plate. The organization’s mission is to increase economic development and jobs in the farm and food sector, improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change, and improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters through the implementation of the Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan.

The Farm to Plate Network is responsible for collectively implementing the strategic plan, as well as advancing organizational goals of members. Membership encompasses farms, food production businesses, specialty food producers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, capital providers, and government. This approach develops strategic conversations and action across multiple sectors and perspectives to make systemic change that no organization can accomplish alone.

In total, there are 20 distinct groups in the network including the CSA and Healthcare Community of Practice. CSAs have a unique role to play in the intersection of local food and health in Vermont. This model is one of the most mature farm + health care practice connections in the state, familiar to both local food organizations and health care professionals.

There are both well-established CSA and health care programs and newer programs in the early stages. Given the broad range in development, there are many opportunities and benefits derived from peer-connection. These programs also have many points in common with evidence-based health programs used outside of Vermont, creating a context for learning from national and regional groups. This development can be helped with input from people who have particular expertise (clinical, reimbursement, logistics, etc.), who may not have capacity to meet with multiple individual programs but could lend perspective in a group setting.

We believe that a peer-based Community of Practice is a useful way to approach the big topic of food and health, which can be overwhelming without additional focus. With our collective experience in CSA-Health Care connections, we can pinpoint specific gaps and areas for development to explore including data collection. This document serves as a tool for those looking to establish healthcare and CSA programs, as well as for group members seeking to better understand how individual programs fit into the broader picture of health and expand their work by demonstrating impact on a statewide level.
**Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont**

**Farmacy: Food Is Medicine**
This "Prescription CSA" or "Food is Medicine" program addresses three major needs in Addison County: diet-related illness, food insecurity and local farm viability. These produce prescriptions are written by health care providers and provide free CSA shares supplied by three local farmers (10-12 pounds per week). See page 7 for more information.

**Farm Shares for Health**
Farm Shares for Health is a partnership between local, organic farmers and health professionals who are passionate about providing Vermont communities with farm-fresh foods, information on healthy eating and cooking, and tips for healthy living. The mission of the Farm Shares for Health team is to support individuals and families in eating together, eating home-cooked meals year 'round, and cooking with fresh, local produce. See page 8 for more information.

**Northwest Farmacy CSA**
The Northwest Farmacy CSA program is a partnership initiative between Healthy Roots Collaborative and the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH), to support the health and wellbeing of community members experiencing diet-related health conditions and barriers to food access. Participants receive a free, weekly CSA share for 14 weeks provided by a local farms containing an assortment of fresh, nutritious, in-season produce. See page 9 for more information.
VFFC’s Farmacy Project

VFFC’s Farmacy Project emphasizes 2 core elements – fresh produce prescriptions for individuals as “medicine” for chronic diet-related health conditions and fresh produce provided to clients grown exclusively by new and emerging Rutland farmers. Since 2015, the Farmacy Project has successfully linked the underserved in Rutland County to the rich, robust healthy world of good food, community programming and education. See page 10 for more information.

The VYCC Health Care Share

The Health Care Share (HCS) connects Vermont families with fresh, local food through their health care provider. HCS currently partners with 11 medical centers who identify patient families experiencing food insecurity, diet-related disease, or other distinct health risks and provide a referral to the program to provide fresh, local produce so patient families can access a more nutritious diet. The program lasts between 12 and 17 weeks, depending on the partner. See page 11 for more information.
Healthcare CSA Programs in Vermont

Key

1. Healthcare CSA program available
2. Healthy Roots Collaborative and NOTCH: Northwest Farmacy CSA
3. UVMMC's Farm Shares for Health
4. ACORN's Farmacy: Food Is Medicine
5. The VYCC Health Care Share
6. VFFC's Farmacy Project

Participating Farm
46 healthcare clinics involved. See page 12 for a list of participating clinics.

75% of participants screened positive for food insecurity. 3 out of 5 programs screened for food insecurity using a validated screening tool such as the USDA Housing Screening Tool Survey or Hunger Vital Signs™.

Cardiovascular risk factors were cited as the top conditions for program referral. Common patient diagnoses include: hypertension, diabetes, pre-diabetes, obesity, and high cholesterol.

$10,000 to $26,000 Average annual household income.

75% of participants were on Medicare, Medicaid, or Dr. Dyasaur. Data from ACORN and VFCC programs.

Cost was reported as the #1 barrier to participants purchasing vegetables.
Healthcare CSA Programs: Key Metrics

1,841 people reached
Across all 5 programs; based on household size.

$119,212 in produce purchased
(Approximately 59,230 pounds)

73,530 pounds donated for programs
(70,000 pounds donated by the Farm at VYCC)

670+ volunteer hours
(Based on data from 3 programs)

Support from 21 for-profit farms and 5 non-profit farms
See page 12 for a full list of participating farms.

Notes: Only one program (UVMMC Farm Shares for Health) had a distinction between individual shares and household size shares for 2022. Insufficient demographic data were unavailable to report in 2022.
Spotlight: ACORN’s Farmacy: Food Is Medicine

Facts:
- 83% of participants reported facing at least one of the following health conditions: High Blood Pressure, Prediabetes, Diabetes, Obesity, High Cholesterol.
- 71% of participants are on Medicaid, Medicare, or Dr. Dynasaur.

Education: Member handbooks, weekly newsletters, recipe cards, food samples, opportunity for community organization representatives to come and chat with people (CVOEO weatherization, for example), free enrollment in the Middlebury Co-op’s Food For All program which offers cooking classes.

Impact:
- 67% of respondents tried either a new fruit, vegetable, or recipe through the program.
- 76% of participants said they felt very confident in their ability to prepare meals using fruits and vegetables.

Images courtesy of Lindsey Berk, ACORN. Used with permission.

“You know that old saying you are what you eat? It’s true...I’m 63 years old and I can keep up with my little 16-month old great grandson and I just feel like it’s this Farmacy that has really contributed... So, it’s such a—no—it’s the most beautiful thing ever. Really.”

– 2022 Farmacy Food Is Medicine Participant
Spotlight: UVMMC's Farm Shares for Health

Facts:
- The program was offered to all past and active participants of the Comprehensive Pain Program at UVM Medical Center and was not based on financial need.
- Participants utilize evidence-based complementary and alternative therapies with modern medicine to optimize their health. Learning how diet influences chronic pain, consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and increasing confidence in the kitchen are important strategies in pain management.

Education:
- Program notebook with information about the farms, meal preparation and planning guides, food storage tips, and more. Recipes in the notebook include QR codes linking to Culinary Medicine’s new gardening and cooking video series titled *What’s That Food?* that provides demos of growing and cooking fresh vegetables.

Impact:
- Participants pick up their sponsored shares directly at the farm or farmer’s market and are able to experience the program as a regular CSA member to encourage a social connection and build relationships with local farms.

“The program has given me the freedom to experiment with different fruits and vegetables that I, most likely, would not have tried otherwise. [The farmers and staff] have been patient with all of my questions and very informative. My refrigerator is stocked with fresh foods (instead of packaged food) and I am not craving the foods that are not as good for me. The program is fantastic!”

— 2022 UVMMC Farm Shares for Health Participant

Image (right) courtesy of Lisa Hoare, UVMMC. *Participant feedback word cloud.* Used with permission.
Facts:
- 100% of participating patients screened "positive" for food insecurity.
- Pilot year serving 10 patients with diagnosed cardiovascular risk factors.

Education: Weekly newsletter provided with CSA shares featuring nutrition education and recipes, and summer/fall SNAP-Ed cooking class opportunities offered through NOTCH (the American Heart Association's Healthy for Life® program).

Impact:
- 48% increase in participants reporting trying to eat more vegetables now compared to before the CSA program.
- 24% increase in participants reporting trying to eat more fruit now compared to before the program.

"You provided healthy food when I couldn’t. Thank you."

"I used tomatoes in chili and grilled the zucchini and carrots with olive oil, and had salads. I love all the fresh veggies."

– 2022 Northwest Farmacy CSA participants
61% of participants did not work or were unable to; 66% screened "positive" for food insecurity.
80% of participants were on Medicaid, Medicare, or Dr. Dynasaur.
111 of total reached were children under the age of 18 and 143 were adults over the age of 60.

**Education:** Summer and Fall PEG TV Cooking Series, 3 in-person cooking classes during the summer, 5 participated in Nutrition and Wellness Coaching, on site demos at Rutland pick-up location, and recipes in newsletter.

**Impact:**
- 66% of participants rated their health as good or better before the program while 75% rated their health as good or better at the end of the program.
- 75% of participants said they were very likely to continue to eat fruits and vegetables over the six months after the program ended.
- 87% said they gained more knowledge about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables for their health.

*Images courtesy of Emma Hileman, VFFC. Used with permission.*

*“Farmacy is supporting my growth—it’s farmers engaging in community. When all hands come together, the pieces come together.”* –Laura Burch, SVT Farm, first year growing for VFCC’s Farmacy Project
58% of participants screened “positive” for food insecurity.

**Education:** Weekly newsletter to each participant weekly cooking class by VA dietitian offered virtually, SNAP Coordinators at handful of sites, and 3 taste tests hosted by VYCC youth crews at the busiest site.

**Impact:**
- 23% increase in members more frequently during week cooking from scratch with fresh produce.
- 17% increase in eating fresh produce more frequently during week.

Images courtesy of Lily Bradburn, VYCC. Used with permission.

“Thank you for doing this, we love the food, we loved the pesto, it was absolutely delicious! This is the highlight of our summer picking up our bags every week and exploring the fresh produce inside.”

“Fresh produce, fun things to try, introducing new foods to my kids, the frozen chickens were amazing and something the only real meat we had during the week.”

–2022 VYCC Health Care Share Participants
Participating Farms

Boardman Hill Farm (West Rutland)
Creamery Bridge Farm (Montgomery)
Evening Song (Cuttingsville)
Familia Farm (West Pawlet)
Farm and Wilderness (Plymouth)
Full Moon Farm (Hinesburg)
Green Heron Farm (Richford)
Hildene Farm (Manchester)
Hunger Moon Farm (Enosburg Falls)
Intervale Food Hub (Burlington)
Jericho Settlers’ Farm (Jericho)
Last Resort Farm (Bristol)
Liberty Hill Farm & Orchard (Enosburg Falls)
New Leaf Organics (Bristol)
Old Road Farm (Granville)
Otter Point Farm (West Haven)
Quill Hill Farm (Poultney)
Singing Cedars Farmstead* (Orwell)
Smokey House Center (Danby)
Spring Lake Ranch (Cuttingsville)
SVT Farm (Wells)
Tell a Tale Farm (West Rutland)
The Farm at VYCC (Richmond)
West Farm (Jeffersonville)
Yoder Farm (Danby)

*Participated in two programs

Participating Health Clinics

All Dimensions Primary Care
Associates in Primary Care
Community Health Centers of Burlington (4 clinics)
Central Vermont Medical Center (4 clinics)
Convenient Care Rutland
Enosburg Health Center (NOTCH)
Forensic Consultation and Counseling
Gifford Medical Center
Health Team, Heart Center, Diabetes and Endocrinology and Clinical Transition Team
Hogenkamp & Hogenkamp
Ludlow Health Center
North Country Hospital
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
Neshobe Family Medicine
Porter Pediatrics
Porter Primary Care (Brandon, Middlebury, Vergennes)
Porter Women’s Health Program
Richford Health Center (NOTCH)
Richmond Family Medicine
Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC) Community
Rutland Community Health Center (CHCRR) - 6 clinics
Rutland County Free Clinic
Rutland Mental Health
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
The Health Center, Plainfield
Thrive Center of the Green Mountains
UVM Medical Center Comprehensive Pain
Veterans Affairs (2 clinics)
Village Health
You First – Vermont Department of Health
ACORN’s Farmacy: Food Is Medicine
Lindsey Berk, Executive Director
Addison County Relocalization Network
(802) 382-0401 | lindsey@acornvt.org
acornvt.org

Farm Shares for Health
Emily Clairmont, Clinical Dietitian, Nutrition Services and Comprehensive Pain Program
University of Vermont Medical Center
(802) 847-5550 | emily.clairmont@uvmhealth.org
uvmhealth.org

Northwest Farmacy CSA
Christine Porcaro, Healthy Roots Collaborative Coordinator
(908) 229-3820 | cporcaro@nrpcvt.com
healthyrootsvt.org

Miranda Henry, NOTCH Healthy Choices Coordinator
(802) 255-5575 | mhenry@notchvt.org
notchvt.org

Vermont Farmers Food Center Farmacy Project
Emma Hileman, CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice Co-Chair Person
Program Director, Vermont Farmers Food Center
(802) 342-4219 | ehileman@vermontfarmersfoodcenter.org

Heidi Lynch, CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice Co-Chair Person
Executive Director, Vermont Farmers Food Center
hlynch@vermontfarmersfoodcenter.org
vermontfarmersfoodcenter.org

Vermont Farm to Plate
Kelly Dolan, Network Manager
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
(802) 828-7905 | kellydolan@vsjf.org
vtfarmtoplate.com

VYCC Health Care Share
Lily Bradburn, Community Health Program Manager
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps
(802) 307-2421 | lily.bradburn@vycc.org
vycc.org