

# IMPROVING PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROCESSES

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## INTRO & BACKGROUND

### HOW CAN A PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM CENTER HEALTH EQUITY AS IT GROWS?

Produce prescription (Rx) programs are a proven intervention to delay the onset and progression of chronic illness in structurally vulnerable groups.<sup>1</sup> Improving diet quality interrupts the pathophysiology of chronic illness.<sup>2</sup>

The Produce Rx Program at DOH currently utilizes paper vouchers. Transitioning to electronic benefits can reduce stigma and increase participation.<sup>3,4</sup>

An annual application process will facilitate compliance with legislative rules and equitable access.

### MECHANISM TARGETED BY PRODUCE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAMS



Figure 1. Food security and the pathophysiology of diet-related chronic illness

## OBJECTIVES

- > Explore electronic benefit mechanism solutions and create an overview of existing options, including capabilities and cost
- > Create implementation, monitoring & evaluation plans for transition from vouchers to electronic benefit mechanism
- > Develop an annual healthcare organization application process and supporting materials that align with legislative language and health equity goals

## METHODS

### ELECTRONIC BENEFIT MECHANISM

- > Interviewed staff and outlined DOH requirements for electronic benefits
- > Connected with other produce prescription programs for lessons learned and met with vendors for demos
- > Mapped out internal DOH processes to request funding and establish a contract; established cross-departmental collaboration with WIC for potential integration

### HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATION APPLICATION

- > Used BRFSS, Washington Tracking Network, and WA Aggregated Health Center Data to build an evidence-based scoring rubric for prospective healthcare partners
- > Matched application questions to legislative language and measures of social determinants of health



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- > Choose a scalable electronic benefit solution that can accommodate a wide range of retailers and cultural preferences
- > Build in program monitoring and evaluation through participant & retailer surveys, as well as a regular cycle of summative evaluation, to ensure equitable delivery
- > Launch application process statewide for FY 2023; use it to annually re-evaluate partners for fit with health equity goals



Image: Medical Bag, 2018.

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