

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT FUNDING IN ACTION

SUPPORTING QUALITY NUTRITION AT FOOD PANTRIES

Health District partners with food pantry to increase healthy foods

Challenge

Feeding America projects that nationally 42 million people (1 in 8), including 13 million children (1 in 6), may experience food insecurity in 2021. Distributing food through the charitable food sector is one approach to alleviating food insecurity for those experiencing hunger. Unfortunately, research shows that people who receive charitable food through food pantries, are more likely to have comorbidities such as High Blood Pressure and Diabetes. To address both food insecurity and support healthy diets to prevent and treat chronic diseases for those most at risk, it is important for food pantries to be able provide a variety of healthy foods for their clients.

Approach

To increase nutritional quality of food at local food pantries in Southern Nevada, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) partnered with a local faith-based food pantry, Al-Maun Neighborly Needs at the Masjid As Sabur mosque, to implement the Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP) program and a nutrition standard policy. The nutrition policy institutionalizes the SWAP food ranking system, which uses saturated fat, sodium, and sugar contents, to rank and categorize foods. Pantry shelves are then labeled according to a stoplight system (green, yellow, red) to separate items according to their nutrition content.

Results

The SWAP program was fully implemented in the pantry in early 2021. A refrigerator was purchased for the pantry allowing them to increase the types of foods they can provide including frozen fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. In addition, additional shelves were purchased to allow shelf-stable foods to be displayed according to the stoplight ranking system. Educational materials including shelf-tags and posters highlighting the food ranking system were also posted inside and outside of the pantry. The nutrition policy was adopted in in July 2021.



At A Glance

SNHD worked with Al-Maun Neighborly Needs at the Masjid As Sabur mosque in Las Vegas to make healthy foods more accessible. The SWAP program was implemented in their food pantry and was supported by the adoption of a nutrition standards policy. With these changes we hope to increase access to healthier foods and increase food security for clients. SNHD will continue to provide technical assistance and provide nutrition education to support the growing health interest at Al-Maun Neighborly Needs.

Contacts

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