FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRESCRIPTIONS (RX)
What is a Fruit and Vegetable Rx?

- Targeted benefits for fruits and vegetables.
- Various models for distribution, typically distributed in a clinic or community-based health setting.
- Patients redeem at participating retailers.

Credit: Wholesome Wave
Why Fruit and Vegetable Rx?

- Studies show participation in Fruit and Vegetable Rx programs has been associated with:
  - Improved food security¹
  - Improved glycemic control²
  - Increased fruit and vegetable consumption³

- 2019 publication modeled a fruit and vegetable subsidy for all adults using Medicare and Medicaid⁴:
  - Nearly 2 million cardiovascular events prevented
  - Save almost $40 billion in formal health care costs

Sources:
3. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6266424/
4. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6424388/
Washington’s Fruit and Vegetable Rx Program

• 12 health care and public health organizations distribute ‘prescriptions’.

• Eligible patients:
  o Screen positive for food insecurity
  o Have/are at-risk for a chronic disease

• $10 fruit and vegetable prescription; redeemable at participating grocery stores.

• Patients receive equivalent of $250 worth of prescriptions over 6-month period.
Challenges and Lessons Learned

- If working with multiple health care systems – allow for some system-specific flexibility.

- Balancing evaluation with competing priorities for health care partners.

- The redemption process needs improvement.
Sustainability

• Grant funding for the Fruit and Vegetable Rx Program is not a long-term solution.

• Need to build the case for health insurance payers to include in their payment models.
  o Patient health outcomes
  o Cost of care
  o Quality of care
Opportunities

State
- State pilots to evaluate the impact of covering Fruit and Vegetable Rx for Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Use Section 1115 Demonstrations Waivers to evaluate the impact of funding Fruit and Vegetable Rx for Medicaid beneficiaries.
  - Examples: North Carolina and Massachusetts

Medicaid Managed Care Organizations
- Provide coverage for Fruit and Vegetable Rx as value-added services.