

Misterys Chairmen, members of the committees, and members of Congress, thank you very much for the invitation to speak with you today. My name is Santana Diaz, the Director of Culinary Operations and Innovation / Executive Chef for Food & Nutrition Services at UC Davis Health.

Good food is...

Good medicine

Good health

Good for the local economy

Good for the environment (it encourages/supports sustainability)'

At UC Davis we are approaching food as medicine from multiple angles: Investment, Food Integration, Behavioral Change, Sourcing from regional farmers. UC Davis has been transitioning to a farm to fork model over the last 4 years. It has been a collaborative effort that we have been testing and piloting. Food Nutrition Services has partnered with our Center for Precision medicine, Center for Precision Nutrition, Center for Healthcare Policy and Research, Health Equity Diversity and Inclusion, and many more to implement. Data is recorded by Precision Medicine and we are using data to adapt our effort and gauge our effectiveness. This collaboration and multi-prong approach is necessary to make change happen.

Food touches every human. Nutrition security is about clean, healthy food.

Good food is good medicine -- The traditional blanket approach to meal preparation in hospitals is to feed everyone the same, motivated by cost and labor. So regardless if someone is in the hospital for a broken arm, they get the same low sodium diet that is meant for the 45% of patients who require it. The stigma of hospital food is that it is bland, colorless and tasteless. Food that tastes bad goes to waste and creates waste.

Patients hospitalized at UC Davis Medical Center are today getting the best, most nutritional food possible, with the freshest ingredients, because it complements the great care we provide and enhances healing. Food that is natural, not manufactured, not processed, and without preservatives has best nutritional value, to provide the body with tools it needs to heal.

Healthcare facilities can use the inpatient meals experience to educate and introduce healthy food as medicine over the average of 6.1 days patients are in care. Using fresh food that provides nutrients and not just filling.

Good food requires food requires awareness -- Good food does at times require an open mind and awareness, and what some call "food literacy." Part of our role in Food and Nutrition Services is to offer an array of delicious and nutritious food items, which can help people develop an appreciation for fresh, healthy – *and tasty* – ingredients. Our goal is to show people food can taste good, be healthy, and be satisfying without a lot of processing. Raising awareness and a taste for good food among our employees, students, visitors and patients is an important way to increase the desire for healthy eating at home, too.

Our hope is that the information they take back home will help reach others without having to become a patient.

Good food is a good investment and good for the local economy -- Food waste is not sustainable and its expensive. Using fresh food that tastes good is benefits our patients, our business, our local farmers and environment.

As a business issue when we spend X amount on the 2.4 million meals that go into the garbage, we need to address that. Not only is it a menu engineering issue, but also a labor model structure issue.

Buying from local growers and ranchers – especially at UC Davis Health’s scale – helps provide the economic security that individual farmers in our local region truly need to survive in this day and age. We need to recognize the importance of growing our own food, California alone, loses 50,000 acres per year of a land and about 39k of that to urban development. We’ve built relationship with growers, encouraging some to try new and different crops that are unique and exciting for menu planning and variety. It also helps the farmers forecast planting. These local connections help ensure that we can provide healthy foods for our patients, employees and visitors. This approach also helps keep food prices lower for everyone, because farmers know they have already sold a significant portion of their crops before they even harvest. It’s a win-win for everyone and a model that other communities can find inspiring.

Good for the environment--UC Davis Health has prioritized sustainability by reducing food waste and food packaging, and buying locally to reduce fuel usage, emissions, and transportation costs. What we’re doing IS good for people and the environment.

Thank you for allowing me to be with you today.