



San Francisco
Health Network

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

August 17th, 2021

Congressman McGovern,

Thank you for taking time to visit our food pharmacies - these are some of the most uplifting and inspirational parts of our jobs!

I am a Primary Care Physician and Acting Medical Director within the Department of Public Health. I regularly observe how bridging food and healthcare impacts our patients lives as we have launched and expanded food pharmacies across our primary care sites. Offering free and healthy foods to people from health care institutes build communities of trust, peer support, and engagement in their personal and families' health. I have seen people transform from reluctantly attending their first food pharmacy to weekly coming for socialization and blood pressure checks. Some of these patients informally start "competing" with one another for who has the best blood pressure control - they are motivated to be better for each other. Recipes are shared and stories in an environment of trust that allows the patient to take control of their own health. The key is healthy and fresh foods. So many food programs offer processed carbohydrates, sugar-rich beverages, and high-salt "shelf stable" food items - these foods do not serve as medicine, but often worsen conditions, for those with chronic medical conditions.

I am so proud to be a part of food pharmacy as this is one of the most impactful and empowering steps that we can take with our City to improve their health.

Cheers,

Katie

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