Identifying Food Insecurity and Increasing Access to Nutrition in Brandon, VT

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Problem Identification: Food Insecurity in Vermont

- **64,370 VERMONTERS LIVE IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS, MEANING THEY DON'T HAVE REGULAR ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD (10%)**
  - Lack of affordable housing, low wages, high unemployment, a decrease in the number of local, affordable grocery stores, and lack of public transportation all contribute to hunger and food insecurity in Vermont.
- **17,890 VERMONT CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 LIVE IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS (14%)**
  - Children living in food insecure homes are at greater risk for poor health, nutritional deficiencies and obesity/overweight, as well as developmental delays, poor academic achievement, depression, and increased aggressive or hyperactive behavior.
- **9,812 VERMONT ADULTS OVER 60 LIVE IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS (7%)**
  - Senior Vermonters living in food insecure homes are more likely to be diabetic, suffer from depression and have limited daily activities, and are far less likely to be considered in excellent or good health.

HUNGER FREE VERMONT

Source: www.hungerfreevt.org/hungerinvermont/ [5]

Prevalence of household food insecurity, 2014-2016 average[2]:

USA: 13.0±0.21%

Vermont 10.1±1.33%

Problem Identification: Food Insecurity in Rutland County and Brandon

<u>National School Lunch Program as Proxy</u>

- 2016-2017 Rates of Free* and Reduced** Lunch Eligibility in Brandon[8]:
  - Neshobe Elementary School (Pre-K - 6): 49.04% (205/418)
  - Otter Valley Union High School (7 - 12): 40.04% (213/532)
- Vermont rate: 44.07% (38,034/86,311)[8]
- National rate 2014-2015 was 51.8%[6]

Brandon, VT

*Families with income at or below 130% of the Federal poverty level, the family/household receives 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up, or children are Directly Certified as free eligible.

**Families whose income falls between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level

Source: http://map.feedingamerica.org/ [3]

Public Health Cost

Exhibit 2 **Estimated Costs Attributable to Food Insecurity and Hunger in the US, 2014**

Source of Cost	Costs ($Billion 2014 Dollars)
Direct health-related costs in 2014 based on new research evidence	$29.68
Non-overlapping direct health-related costs reported by Brandeis researchers in 2011, continued in 2014 and expressed in 2014 dollars	$124.92
Indirect costs of lost work time due to workers' illnesses or workers providing care for sick family members based on new research evidence	$5.48
Total direct and indirect 2014 health-related costs	**$160.07**
Indirect costs of special education in public primary and secondary schools, based on new research evidence	$5.91
Total costs of dropouts reported by Brandeis researchers in 2011, continued in 2014 and expressed in 2014 dollars	$12.94
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	**$178.93**

Sources described in document text.

Source: Cook JT, Poblacion AP. 2016 Hunger Report.[1]

There are significant direct and indirect public health costs due to food insecurity. Rutland County's share of food insecure persons nationwide is 0.017%, which extrapolates to $33 million in public health costs for this county alone, based on these 2014 estimates.

Community Perspectives

Kathy Mathis

Director, Brandon Area Food Shelf

"There is still a lot of stigma and embarrassment around asking for help, especially among the elderly. I have women who come in and say, 'Don't tell my husband' and we can slip them a gift card to Hannaford. We created a distribution system that has community members delivering food to their neighbors. Those who can drive and come to pick up [their food] can do that too. We also have a bus that will pick people up and bring them to the Senior Center to socialize and eat a good meal."

Rev. Bill Bartholomew

Pastor, Brandon Congregational Church

"The problem of food insecurity here is significant. Brandon is expensive to live in, and there is little gainful employment outside of Middlebury and Rutland. A lot of people are on fixed incomes or have fallen through the cracks. One woman called me because she had to choose whether to pay her electric bill or buy groceries. Giving Hannaford gift cards to those in need maintains integrity and choice. In addition to food, people lack kitchen space, cooking skills, and education about nutrition. Medical professionals can help by screening for food insecurity. 'It's two o'clock. What did you eat for lunch?' Members of our community need to feel nourished, socialized, and believed in, not marginalized."

Intervention and Methodology

- Need straightforward and effective approach to identifying need and increasing access to information about currently available resources
- Hager et al.'s validated food insecurity screening tool[4]:
  - "We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more. The food that we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."
  - A yes to either question is 97% sensitive and 83% specific for household food insecurity.
- This validated screening tool could be implemented at patient intake, as is current practice for the PHQ-2 depression screen
- Trifold pamphlet is a non-judgmental, discrete, anonymous resource

Results/Response Data

BRANDON AREA FOOD SHELF
(802) 247-6720

The Brandon Area Food Shelf is a community-based organization funded by the generous donations of the local citizens. As we are not funded by any government or private agency, we make it our policy to require only proof of residence in the Brandon/Forestdale/ Sudbury/Goshen area. The Shelf is staffed by volunteers who deliver goods upon pick up.

Areas of food distribution from Hannaford include:
Conway Trailer Park, Forestdale–low income
Brookdale Trailer Park, Forestdale–low income
Pine Tree Trailer Park, Forestdale–low income
Erastus Thayer House, Brandon–low income
Park Village, Brandon–low income, elderly
Conant Square, Brandon–low income, elderly
Neshobe House, Brandon–low income, elderly
Delivery to low income elderly in Forestdale
Barlow and Goldspink Aves–low income

Walk-in pick up at the Brandon Area Food Shelf (Congregational Church) 8:30-9am on Monday.

Free community lunch at the Brandon Senior Center on Friday.

100% of the foodstuffs donated by Hannaford goes to assisting those in need in the Brandon area.

—Kathy Mathis, Director

EFNEP
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

University of Vermont Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) empowers Vermonters to lead healthier lives through hands-on nutrition education. **Programs serve income eligible parents, caregivers and expecting mothers, as well as children and teens.**

The best part? *It's free.*

EFNEP is designed to serve limited-income families. Free programs serve:
- Parents and guardians of youth 19 years old and under
- Pregnant women
- Teens and children

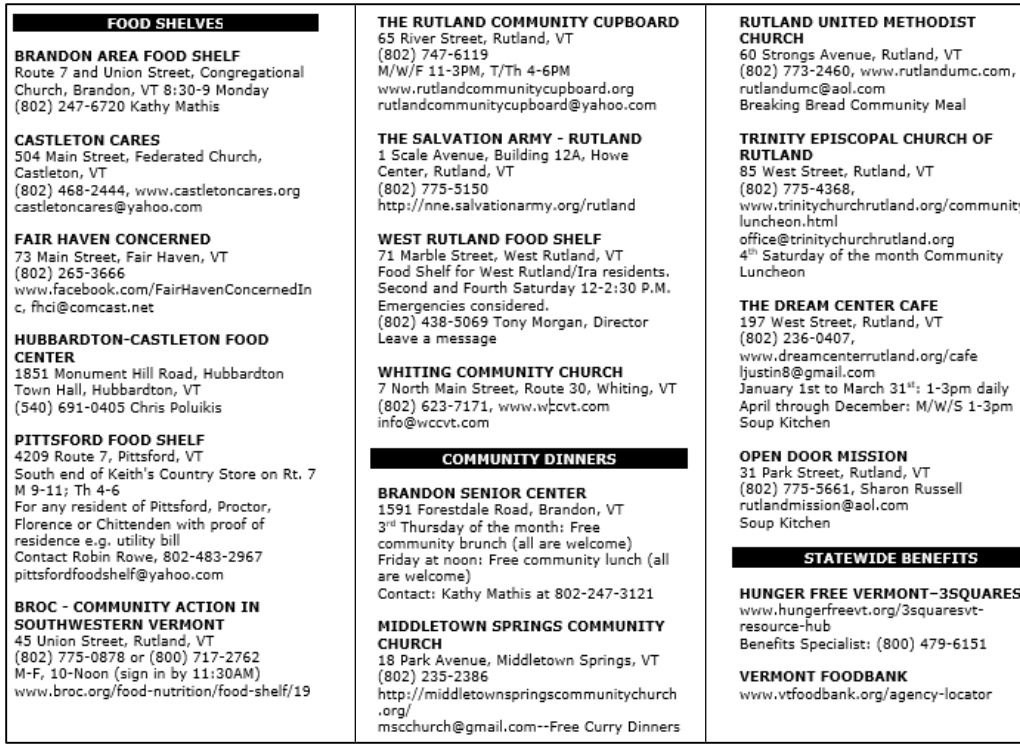
If you are eligible for 3 Squares VT/SNAP, WIC, Head Start and/or free school meals, likely you also qualify for EFNEP. Contact your local EFNEP Nutrition Educator for more information about our services, eligibility and how to sign-up for a free program that best meets your needs.

Rutland County
Kate Bilinksi *EFNEP Educator*
kate.bilinski@uvm.edu | (802) 773-3349 ext.271 or (800) 281-6977
271 N. Main St., Suite 110, Rutland, VT

Brandon Area Food Resources

"We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."

"The food that we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to buy more."



FOOD SHELVES

BRANDON AREA FOOD SHELF
Route 7 and Union Street, Congregational Church, Brandon, VT 8:30-9 Monday
(802) 247-6720 Kathy Mathis

CASTLETON CARES
504 Main Street, Federated Church, Castleton, VT
(802) 468-2444, www.castletoncares.org
castletoncares@yahoo.com

FAIR HAVEN CONCERNED
73 Main Street, Fair Haven, VT
(802) 265-3666
www.facebook.com/FairHavenConcernedInc, fhci@comcast.net

HUBBARDTON-CASTLETON FOOD CENTER
1851 Monument Hill Road, Hubbardton
Town Hall, Hubbardton, VT
(540) 691-0405 Chris Poluikis

PITTSFORD FOOD SHELF
4209 Route 7, Pittsford, VT
South end of Keith's Country Store on Rt. 7
M 9-11; Th 4-6
For any resident of Pittsford, Proctor, Florence or Chittenden with proof of residence e.g. utility bill
Contact Robin Rowe, 802-483-2967
pittsfordfoodshelf@yahoo.com

BROC - COMMUNITY ACTION IN SOUTHWESTERN VERMONT
45 Union Street, Rutland, VT
(802) 775-0878 or (800) 717-2762
M-F, 10-Noon (sign in by 11:30AM)
www.broc.org/food-nutrition/food-shelf/19

THE RUTLAND COMMUNITY CUPBOARD
65 River Street, Rutland, VT
(802) 747-6119
M/W/F 11-3PM, T/Th 4-6PM
www.rutlandcommunitycupboard.org
rutlandcommunitycupboard@yahoo.com

THE SALVATION ARMY - RUTLAND
1 Scale Avenue, Building 12A, Howe Center, Rutland, VT
(802) 775-5150
http://nne.salvationarmy.org/rutland

WEST RUTLAND FOOD SHELF
71 Marble Street, West Rutland, VT
Food Shelf for West Rutland/Ira residents. Second and Fourth Saturday 12-2:30 P.M. Emergencies considered.
(802) 438-5069 Tony Morgan, Director
Leave a message

WHITING COMMUNITY CHURCH
7 North Main Street, Route 30, Whiting, VT
(802) 623-7171, www.wccvt.com
info@wccvt.com

COMMUNITY DINNERS

BRANDON SENIOR CENTER
1591 Forestdale Road, Brandon, VT
3rd Thursday of the month: Free community brunch (all are welcome)
Friday at noon: Free community lunch (all are welcome)
Contact: Kathy Mathis at 802-247-3121

MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS COMMUNITY CHURCH
18 Park Avenue, Middletown Springs, VT
(802) 235-2386
http://middletownspringscommunitychurch.org/
mscchurch@gmail.com--Free Curry Dinners

RUTLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
60 Strongs Avenue, Rutland, VT
(802) 773-2460, www.rutlandumc.com, rutlandumc@aol.com
Breaking Bread Community Meal

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RUTLAND
85 West Street, Rutland, VT
(802) 775-4368,
www.trinitychurchrutland.org/community-luncheon.html
office@trinitychurchrutland.org
4th Saturday of the month Community Luncheon

THE DREAM CENTER CAFE
197 West Street, Rutland, VT
(802) 236-0407,
www.dreamcenterrutland.org/cafe
ljustin8@gmail.com
January 1st to March 31st: 1-3pm daily
April through December: M/W/S 1-3pm
Soup Kitchen

OPEN DOOR MISSION
31 Park Street, Rutland, VT
(802) 775-5661, Sharon Russell
rutlandmission@aol.com
Soup Kitchen

STATEWIDE BENEFITS

HUNGER FREE VERMONT–3SQUARESVT
www.hungerfreevt.org/3squaresvt-resource-hub
Benefits Specialist: (800) 479-6151

VERMONT FOODBANK
www.vtfoodbank.org/agency-locator

- Created a tri-fold pamphlet containing validated screening questions and a list of local and state resources to consolidate information in one convenient handout.
- Available in waiting room, examination rooms, and given to providers to offer to patients in need. Preliminary reception was encouraging, and it will take time to find out how this guide is used.

Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

Evaluation of Effectiveness

- Number of remaining pamphlets may be counted at the end of each month to determine how many were distributed
- Brandon Area Food Shelf is first-line community contact, so its director could ask individuals how they found out about its services and record the number who had used the resource guide

Limitations

- The pamphlet is currently only available in the medical office to those already in the healthcare system
- Increasing access to food supplies addresses one barrier to food insecurity, but does not address affordable housing, employment, wages, or transportation

Recommendations for future projects

- Survey to identify percentage of local population that is food insecure and percentage that are currently accessing resources in order to ascertain proportion of needs met by infrastructure presently in place
- Further elucidate barriers to utilization of available food resources e.g. lack of information, inconvenience, stigma
- Widen scope to address inadequate nutrition of those who are not food insecure but need additional knowledge, resources, or motivation to create healthful meals

References

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2. ERR-237 Economic Research Service/USDA. Household Food Security in the United States in 2016. Table 4: Prevalence of household food insecurity and very low food security by State, 2014-16 average. 2016. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84973/err-237.pdf
3. Feeding America. Mapping the Meal Gap. 2015. http://map.feedingamerica.org/
4. Hager ER, Quigg AM, Black MM, et al. Development and validity of a 2-item screen to identify families at risk for food insecurity. Pediatrics. 2010;126(1):e26-32.
5. Hunger Free Vermont. 2018. www.hungerfreevt.org/hungerinvermont/
6. Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: Selected years, 2000-01 through 2014-15 National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_204.10.asp
7. Schattman R, Nickerson V, Berlin L. Farm to Plate: Strengthening Vermont's Food System. 4.1 Food Security in Vermont. 2015. http://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/plan/chapter/4-1-food-security-in-vermont
8. Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Annual Statistical Report Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price School Meals, School Year 2016-2017. http://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-nutrition-free-and-reduced-eligibility-report-2017.pdf

Interview Consent

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library Scholar Works website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he has explained the nature and purpose of this project. The interviewee affirms that she/he has consented to this interview.

Yes __X__ / No _____

Names: Kathy Mathis, Bill Bartholomew