



**Stanford**  
MEDICINE

2021

Community Health Symposium  
**ABSTRACT**

**Yessica Martinez Mulet; Abel Gonzalez; Lila C. Mack; Patricia Rodriguez Espinosa, PhD; Hector Romero; Wei-ting Chen, PhD; Michelle Houser; Maya R. Murthy; Jason Wong; Liz David; Rakhi Singh; Lisa Rosas, MPH, PhD**

## **FOOD BOX PILOT STUDY: BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS OF HEALTHY EATING WITH PROVIDED FOOD BOXES**

Food insecurity is prevalent problem in low-income Latinx households. Provision of healthy food (in the form of boxes, produce prescription or other forms) is often considered a way to address food insecurity. However, current literature provides minimal context on the barriers and facilitators experienced by low-income families when attempting to use healthy food boxes. To address this gap, the Food Box Pilot Study sought to: 1) explore the impact of healthy food items on diet behaviors, 2) understand the challenges and facilitators for utilizing food items optimally, and 3) test and improve our ability to collaborate with safety net clinics, food banks, and volunteer organizations to provide nutritional assistance during COVID-19. Latinas with a BMI of  $\geq 30$  were recruited from Samaritan House and Fair Oaks Health Center, and received a weekly healthy food box for 8 weeks.

Results indicated Latinas are often the food preparers in their homes, emphasizing their potential to impact household behavior. During qualitative interviews participants expressed initial unfamiliarity with particular food items. Some participants progressively integrated novel foods into their diets, while others expressed needing additional support. Nonetheless, provision of food boxes allowed participants to try new foods, and in some cases to make these parts of their diets. Transportation emerged as a key barrier limiting access to nutrition resources. Most notably, food assistance provided monetary relief and allowed participants to use financial resources for other necessities.

Overall, this food box pilot study underscores the importance of community partnerships as a tool for addressing food insecurity.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNER**

SAMARITAN HOUSE

FAIR OAKS HEALTH CENTER

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

PENINSULA FOOD RUNNERS