



BNMC FARM TO HOSPITAL

Impact Report



December 2023

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Executive Summary

BNMC is a 120-acre medical campus with 11 member institutions. In 2018, the BNMC was one of 44 organizations nationwide, and one of four organizations in New York State to receive a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local Food Promotion Program Grant to create a culture of healthy food practices and increase local food procurement.

The BNMC Farm to Hospital Implementation program addressed the then-current lack of procurement of locally and regionally produced foods among healthcare institutions in Western New York, this, despite the State's rich agricultural topography. New York State ranks nationally for its top agricultural products such as apples, corn, grapes, and cabbage.

There was also an observed, demonstrated need for an education, marketing, and awareness campaign - for consumers, growers, distributors, professionals, educators, and government officials. This need, opportunity, and demand was identified in a 2015 BNMC Farm to Hospital Planning program, which the USDA Local Food Promotion Program also funded.

The BNMC Farm to Hospital program created a model that prioritizes local agriculture, enables farms to access new markets (hospitals), and can be replicated across the state. This collaborative work created a culture that embraces local farms through prioritizing local procurement; established and expanded Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farmers market programs. It also established greater food chain transparency; increased awareness and knowledge among consumers of local food procurement efforts, and provided knowledge and skill-building opportunities to agribusiness stakeholders (farmers, distributors, and food service teams).



- 120+ Acre Urban Innovation District
- Home to Hospitals & Research
- 16,000 Employees
- 1.5 million patients and visitors annually

Introduction



“Healthcare Institutions are pioneering practices to support a food system that is environmentally sustainable, improves nutritional quality, and supports human dignity and justice”

*Healthcare Without Harm 2020-2021
Healthcare Food Trends*

In 2014, the BNMC Department of Health and Well-Being gathered healthcare partners Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Care Center and Kaleida Health to start a campus-wide Farm to Hospital program to meet the food and health needs of patients, visitors, and employees, the program also aimed to address issues of environmental and economic sustainability.

The healthcare institutions on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus serve as community anchors for a myriad of reasons, and with the BNMC Farm to Hospital Initiative, they turned to focus on providing healthier food options, adopting value-based food procurement methods, and bolstering the local food supply chain.

To fully realize this vision the BNMC sought, and received generous funding from the USDA Food Promotion Program while partnering with the national organization, Healthcare Without Harm, to help as they and their hospital partners as they made their way as pioneers in local food procurement. This is the story of their journey.

We thank The USDA for support of our program

Acknowledgments

Throughout this initiative, the BNMC has been lucky to have a passionate team of professionals to lend their expertise.

- Roswell Park shared knowledge on operations, and contracts, and facilitated collaboration with their group purchasing organization and
- Kaleida Health- shared knowledge on operations, and contracts and facilitated working meetings with their food service contractor
- Practice Greenhealth/Health Care Without Harm informed the strategy with best practices from their work to transform farm-to-hospital supply chains nationally
- Cornell Cooperative Extension brought knowledge from its work on Western New York's agricultural economy and with farmers and producers.
- University at Buffalo researchers contributed perspectives on public and community health.
- The Field & Fork Network provided insight on local food access.
- Funding for BNMC Farm to Hospital was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant agreement number AM180100XXXXG117. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

The Team

- Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center - Chris Dibble, Executive Director of Nutrition and Food Services; Linda Leising, Senior Clinical Dietitian
- Kaleida Health: Buffalo General Medical Center – Hank Cole, Director of Strategic Planning and Rehabilitation Medicine; Kenneth Synder, Vice President of Physician Quality
- Kaleida Health: John R. Oishei Children's Hospital - Jessica Mabie, Director of Strategic Planning and Implementation
- Metz Culinary – Zack Gidwitz, Systems General Manager
- Healthcare Without Harm - Jennifer Obadia, Eastern US Regional Director; Betsy Skoda, Regional Program Manager
- Timbre Consulting - Antonina Simeti, Founder
- Cornell Cooperative Extension - Cheryl Bilinski, Local Food Systems Specialist
- Field and Fork Network - Lisa Tucker French, Executive Director
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service - Theresa Davis, Grants Management Specialist
- BNMC Team Members – Marla Guarino, Beth Machnica, Jonathan McNeice



Champions

The work of developing a sustainable locally sourced, value-based procurement program would not have been possible without passionate partners. From the beginning, finding champions within the institutions and throughout the food supply chain was a necessity for the growth of the Farm to Hospital Initiative. Learning from best practice models outside the region inspired. The project team developed collaborative groups to ensure proper implementation methods and sustainability.

The Healthy Food in Health Care Work Council was an educational and networking center; the Healthy Food in Health Care Steering Committee defined work goals; regular monthly meetings with Food Service Directors, Managers, chefs, and staff created the commitment to and execution of project goals. All players were necessary for a successful initiative.

As a member of the Practice Greenhealth network, the BNMC team was able to bring a Healthcare Without Harm consultant to Buffalo to help to develop new strategies alongside our hospitals' leadership and food service teams. Healthcare Without Harm facilitated peer-to-peer learning during site visits and monthly check-ins, designed a learning field trip to the University of Vermont Medical Center (UVM) for Roswell Park staff, and helped develop the implementation of best practices in local procurement.

Project Objectives

1

Technical support and liaison

Provide technical support and act as a liaison for each healthcare institution to understand and incorporate value-based food procurement. This means food is sourced with consideration and intention to support health outcomes, environmental sustainability, and local economies.

2

Procurement of local foods

Tailor unique procurement and local foods programming for Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Buffalo General Medical Center as they worked to increase procurement of local produce while effectively educating their patients, visitors, and employees.

3

Food Chain Transparency

Enhance food chain transparency to assist institutions in identifying specific farms in New York State where their produce was sourced from. This was made possible by implementing contractual changes along with tracking software. This ensured if foods were invoiced as "New York State grown and produced", it was indeed from New York State here and not just labeled as such.

4

Education (Marketing & Communications)

Educate consumers about the health benefits of local produce. The BNMC worked alongside the hospital teams to design and implement a unique "Harvest of The Month" promotion and awareness campaign in both institutions' cafeterias, employee newsletters, and internal intranet.

5

Professional Development

Provide opportunities for food service staff, farmers, distributors, and hospital teams to engage in professional development, knowledge/skill building, and presentation opportunities.

Opportunity

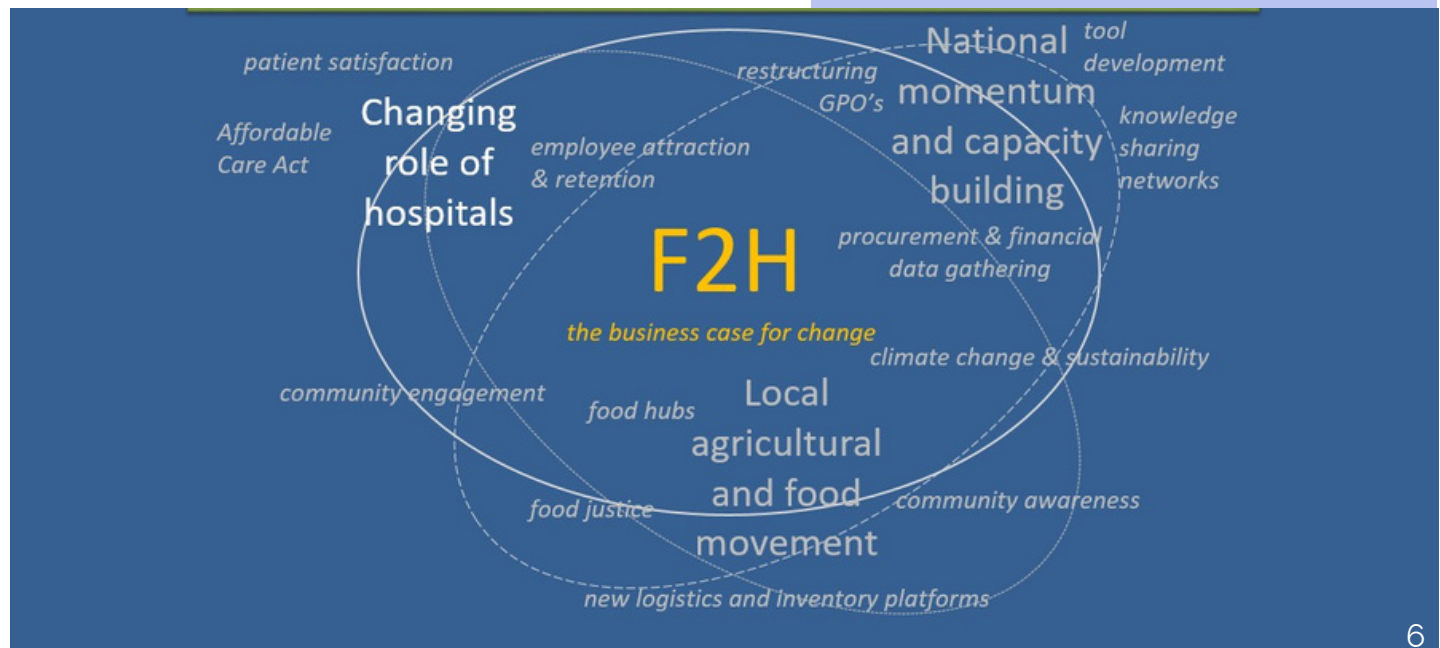
Healthcare systems have specific needs as they order large volumes of food to serve a population of customers with complex medical needs. Institutions have an opportunity to effect positive change in the health and well-being of their patients and communities by investing in locally grown foods.

This keeps money flowing into the local economy, ensures healthier, more nutritious foods are being served, and impacts on the environment are minimal. To incorporate local produce, institutions need to consider specifications, cost, seasonality, availability, tracking, and whether it fits into existing procurement contracts and staff operations.

Producers need to be aware institutions face the challenges of volume, budgets, the need for “institutional ready” food products, and the lack of properly skilled workers to handle raw agricultural products. BNMC partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension who was leading the Farm to School movement in the area and learned how they were helping other large institutions meet the challenges of increasing their local purchases.



- Health
- Environment/Climate
- Sustainability
- Economic Impact
- Food Equity



Challenges

Existing contractual agreements

Both Roswell Park and Kaleida Health have strict procurement contracts with an approved list of products and supplies guided by a prime distributing vendor. These contractual obligations account for 80-90% of all hospital purchases from rubber gloves to apples. Items and pricing are set through a negotiation process with the institution and their group purchasing organization (GPO), or contracted food service management company (Metz Culinary Management). The contract supplies discounted, volume-based pricing on set items. There is little flexibility outside of this contract (under 10% of total sales) and purchasing from other sources can be discouraged. Finding a champion willing to help advocate for smaller, local vendors being embedded within these contract guidelines was necessary.

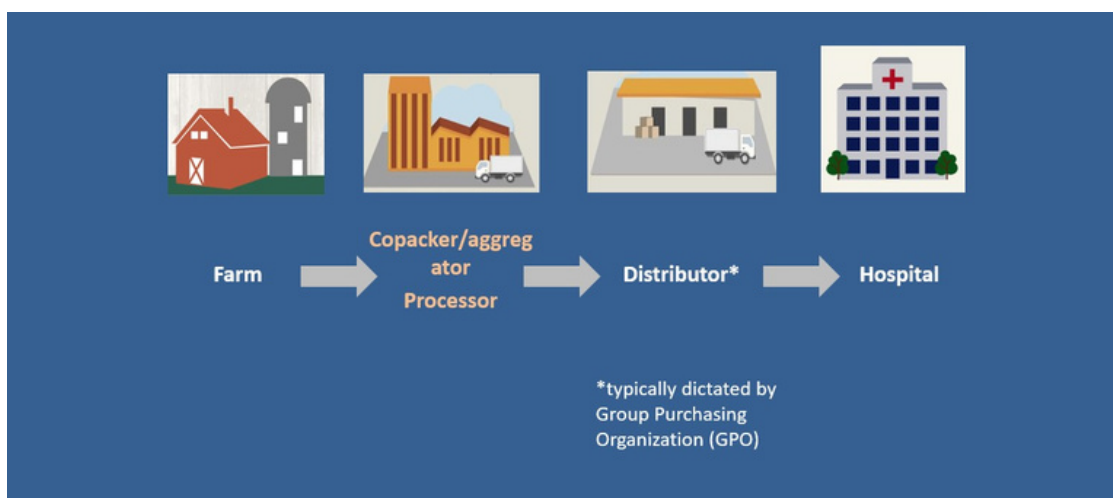
Pricing, volume, and processing

When smaller vendors have their chance to sell to institutions there can be struggles to meet the volume needed at a cost competitive with the larger conventional suppliers. Smaller farms are advised to work collaboratively to aggregate their products, such as a food hub model. Incorporating the processing of foods such as slicing and dicing products is necessary to provide hospitals with quick, easy-to-prepare goods necessary for a busy food service operation with staff that may lack the time and training.

Tracking local purchases

Creating a definition of what is considered a local product was a necessity. Because of Buffalo's geographical position, local produce could be measured as within 250 miles and this would encompass Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Ontario, Canada. For this project, local produce was considered New York state-grown. All the tracking tools used during this initiative - Key Green Solutions, Cornell Cooperative Extensions NY Food Product Database, and Produce Peddlers - had capabilities to measure whether something was New York State-grown. Each measure helped institutions understand the importance of traceability and analyze their procurement practices.

The Local Supply Chain



Challenges

Behavior and Culture Change at Institutional and Individual Levels

There are many food choices employees and guests can make during their time in a hospital setting. Unfortunately, not all will be the healthiest. Hospital settings can be stressful, and people can seek comforting foods. For employees, vendor representatives often bring in food for meetings as a gesture of potential partnership. These choices are often high-fat, processed foods and the standby pizza can make for a quick bite on the go. The BNMC team alongside their institutional partners worked to make the healthy choice the easiest choice. Meatless Monday programs and Practice Greenhealth's Cool Food Recipe contest worked to make better food choices both healthy and delicious. We also implemented improved vending offerings (The Farmhouse Fridge, a locally sourced, wholesome smart fridge), grill and air fryer options in the cafeteria, and salad bars featuring fresh local produce.

COVID/Crisis events

During the grant period, the COVID-19 pandemic added unprecedented stress to both the healthcare system and surrounding communities by exposing the gaps in our food chain and exacerbating existing food insecurity. The BNMC team, working closely with the USDA, was able to redirect resources to farmers and community-led organizations to get healthy foods to those in need, while maintaining healthy food programming for healthcare workers.

Staffing/Engagement

BNMC's two main medical institutions remained committed to local food procurement despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020 staffing has remained a critical challenge throughout the hospital systems, especially in the food service departments. Despite this, the infrastructure set up with the BNMC allowed the continual promotion of local produce throughout the pandemic using the Marketing Campaign templates created by the grant.

Work to Date



Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Buffalo, NY

Roswell Park

On the Medical campus, BNMC's main partners are Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Kaleida Health, who operate 4 hospitals on campus. Both institutions provide food services and are the main targets on campus to increase local food procurement.

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Care Center was an early adapter of the Farm to Institution Initiative. During the first USDA Local Food Promotion Program Planning grant in 2015, which allowed for deeper learning about the inner workings of food service Roswell was a great place to begin local procurement work. Its food service structure gave the team greater flexibility for rethinking operations and the opportunity to explore significant changes to food service operations and how to plan for them.

BNMC formed a close working relationship with Food Service Director, Chris Dibble and her staff. From the beginning, they have committed to working towards delivering an overall culture of health. Dibble knows the nutritional and environmental value of local produce and helped to build the necessary bridges between her contractual obligations and the inclusion of smaller producers, processors, and distributors.

Work to Date

Highlights From Our Work With Roswell

- Roswell's leadership joined the planning team on a field trip to University of Vermont Medical Center. Diane Imrie, Director of Nutrition Services, and her team offered their leadership in moving the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus forward as a more sustainable and locally procured system, where "food as medicine" takes the forefront.
- Roswell started a CSA to Work program for 60-100 hospital staff and community members to easily acquire farm fresh foods. During the growing season a weekly Farmers Market was set up in Kaminski Park. The CSA and Farmers Market programs have grown in popularity and are an integral part of summer on the BNMC campus.
- Healthy changes in the cafeteria: In 2019-2020 Roswell overhauled their cafeteria into easily provide healthier options. Full fat fryers were eliminated and replaced with air fryers and the grill area was expanded. Grab and go healthy meals were added when the salad bar closed due to COVID. The soda fountain was eliminated, so that today, 60% of beverages consumed are water and no-sugar added juice. Plant-based vegan offerings are integrated in the menu using as much local produce as possible.
- Implemented monthly Farm to Hospital Marketing Campaign, "Harvest of the Month" produce features with signage, fact sheets and recipes.
- Participated in the Pandion Optimization Alliance Local Food Pilot, producing a hyper local bid which significantly increased Roswell's ability to increase its local produce procurement. Pandion is Roswell Park's Group Purchasing Organization (GPO)
- Adopted Produce Peddlers tech-based farmer to buyer distribution model, which enabled easy purchase and tracking of regional produce.
- BNMC took Roswell's stakeholders, including food service directors, clinicians, and executives to Practice Greenhealth's 2021 Cleanmed Conference.

Work to Date



Kaleida Health's John R. Oishei Children's Hospital , Buffalo, NY

Kaleida Health

With three hospitals on the Medical Campus, has been a major partner in the BNMC Farm to Hospital Initiative. Kaleida serves its hospitals through a contracted food service vendor. During the 2015 USDA Planning grant, the BNMC worked with Kaleida's contracted provider who offered helpful information on what would be needed to increase the proportion of their procurement dollars spent on local produce.

This allowed the BNMC to establish an understanding of the challenges and to apply for the USDA Implementation Grant. During the grant implementation period for the Farm to Hospital program, the BNMC worked with Kaleida on creating contract language to prioritize local foods. Metz Culinary met the specifications and in 2019 became the food service contractor.

The BNMC met monthly with Metz Culinary food service directors, chefs, and Kaleida management for both strategic planning and implementation efforts. Other Kaleida hospitals off campus (Erie County Medical Center and Millard Fillmore Suburban) joined the BNMC-led group and implemented corresponding programming for promoting local produce, namely the Farm to Hospital Marketing Campaign.

Work to Date

Highlights From Our Work With Kaleida

- The food service team engaged with local farmers to develop relationships where seasonal crops could be incorporated into menu cycles.
- In 2019, a Farmers Market was set up in the cafeteria for employers and visitors to take home produce, adding to the vibrancy of the programming.
- A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program started allowing employees to purchase a share of the seasonal offerings and bring home weekly bundles of produce from featured farms.
- Kaleida began working closely with one of Buffalo's urban food co-ops, the African Heritage Food Cooperative, enabling them to set up a weekly market to sell produce during the summer.
- Metz was provided with a trackability tool Key Green Solutions to accurately measure their increase in local produce over time.
- In 2020 a Farm to Hospital Marketing Campaign was successfully launched to support procurement work with templates featuring area farmers and featured produce. Posters and flyers were placed in the cafeteria, elevators, and lunchrooms and recipe cards were developed to take home. The campaign was broadcast throughout the Kaleida system on e-boards, in morning announcements, and in their email intranet, Kaleidascope. The Local Foods Marketing Campaign at Kaleida Health reached approximately 7,000 employees on the Medical Campus.
- The Kaleida Medical Minute, a local news segment, was filmed to announce the Farm to Hospital campaign and was broadcast on WIVB public television with a total approximate reach each week of 136,000 adults 18+
- BNMC took stakeholders including food service directors, clinicians, and executives to Practice Greenhealth's 2021 Cleanmed Conference.
- BNMC provided Kaleida Health with a membership of Practice Green Health, access to toolkits, and consultation to continue the progress of their Local Foods programming.

Marketing & Communications

In terms of education, one of our primary objectives, a seasonal produce-based marketing campaign to reflect local procurement efforts and highlight local farms was implemented at both Roswell Park and Kaleida Health.

The chefs and food service workers can see why the food they prepare looks and tastes better, the patients and visitors can view hospital food as healing, and employees can be excited for their meal breaks knowing nutritious food produced in their region would be served.

With improved marketing and promotion of local produce in the hospital cafeterias with posters, signage recipes, and nutrition information, the Harvest of the Month Campaigns in both Roswell and Kaleid health facilities increased awareness and knowledge of local food procurement efforts and helped to increase customer satisfaction.

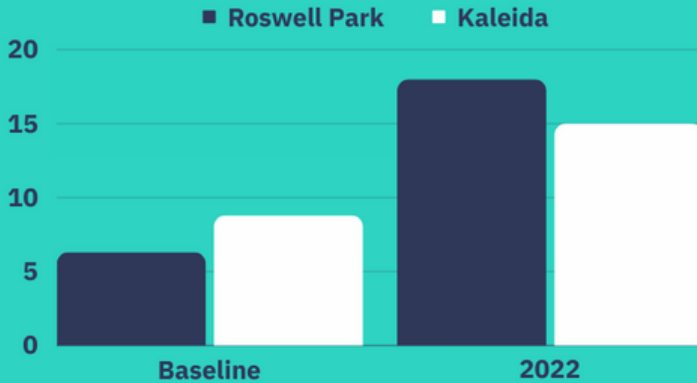
For education and promotion, BNMC provided large signage for a Farm to Hospital Campaign modeled after the successful local Farm to School program. The posters are used throughout the year to feature local foods in hospital patient menus and cafeterias.



DATA SNAPSHOTS

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR FROM THE
FARM TO HOSPITAL PROGRAM

Purchasing



At baseline, local produce procurement was 6.3% at Roswell Park and 8.8% at Kaleida. Our contract changes at Roswell and Kaleida enabled local procurement to increase to 16-20% and 14-16% of all produce spending at each institution

Spending

2018

2022

This program increased combined spending on local produce procurement at both institutions from \$37,608 in 2018 to \$162,784 by 2022.



Employee Engagement

Employees reported being more aware of local procurement efforts on campus, including:



Reach

200,000

Total number of people reached with campus electronic campaigns, cafeteria promotions, magazine publications, television airings, and social media postings was over 200,000.



5

Farmhouse Fridges were installed across campus



42

Local farmers, producers, and distributors benefitted from the program.



10

Farmers increased their knowledge of food safety with GAP training



BNMC
HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Key Learnings and What's Next

In the past decade, there has been much attention on the food supply line by the greater public. COVID-19 exposed the inefficiencies of the traditional rigid journey of food from producer to consumer, and in many cases, smaller, more nimble, local supply chains filled the gaps during the pandemic.

The BNMC shared their understanding of the regional food supply system, by connecting Buffalo healthcare institutions to farmers, processors, and distributors.

Furthermore, The BNMC Farm to Institution Initiative helped to bolster the regional food chain by developing local bids, enhancing trackability, and offering more opportunities for our producers, processors, and distributors to access institutional markets.



- Pandion Regional Food Service Committee - Local Farm Fresh Produce Contract
- KeyGreen Solutions tracking platform
- Enhanced Farmer Grower Connections
- Increased the Percentage of Local Produce Procurement in both Roswell Park and Kaleida

Key Learnings and What's Next

Local Farm Fresh Produce Contract

BMNC's Farm to Hospital program found a partnership with Roswell Park's Group Purchasing Organization, Pandion Optimization Alliance, and formed the Pandion Local Produce Pilot Program Committee to help reconcile their customer's demand for local food portfolios which could meet product volume, price, and consistency.

This Committee, organized by BNMC, brought together healthcare institutions in the Buffalo and Rochester area to create a procurement RFP specific to locally produced fruits and vegetables to enable local farmers and food partners to do business directly with the hospitals.

The bid was awarded to BNMC's long-standing partners, Eden Valley Growers and Produce Peddlers, who had developed an efficient supply line during their work with the area's Farm to School with the price point and volume needed for large-scale procurement.

Keys to Creating Effective Requests for Proposals

- Define local
- Meet with food and farm partners
- Assure volume of products and availability
- Confirm pricing methodology
- Coordinate supply chain logistics for greater efficiency and lower pricing
- Define food safety measures at the farm through GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certification
- Write bid specs that reflect the plan and values
- Make sure the RFP is open to all

Key Learnings and What's Next

Key Green Solutions

The data tell the story of each hospital's local procurement journey. The Key Green Solutions tracking software, Cornell Cooperative Extension's New York Food Product Database, and tracking capabilities built into the Produce Peddlers platform helped institutions understand the importance of traceability and analyze their procurement practices.

While Roswell Park used Produce Peddlers technology, with built-in transparency and traceability from farmer to hospital kitchen, Kaleida Health and Metz still needed a way to track and manage their inventory from local farmers and producers. After researching options, the project team decided on Key Green Solutions, a software company designed to help hospitals across the country track and measure sustainability efforts.

Using USDA funds, Key Green software suite was purchased for Metz Culinary allowing the Key Green team to work directly with vendors, obtaining procurement data and uploading it into the software. The Metz team used the monthly reports to set local spending goals and chart progress alongside the project team. This implementation of tracking systems helped to increase local procurement with traceable origins from 6.3% to 16%.

Economic Impact of Locally Grown Food



14.9
cents

Revenue share to local farms from
conventionally sourced produce



Revenue share to local farms
from locally sourced produce

75 - 85
Cents

Source: USDA Economic Research Service 2022



Local
Procurement At
Buffalo Hospitals
Grows from 6.3%
to 16%

Key Learnings and What's Next

Farmer Grower Connections

In the production and distribution of local produce, the project team's main partners for the institutions were Eden Valley Growers and Produce Peddlers. Eden Valley Growers, a food hub consisting of ten family farmers, works closely with tech-based distributor Produce Peddlers and is known for exemplary tracking and transparency in invoicing, which is a necessity for true local procurement growth. The hub is designed to be able to meet the volume, consistency, and cost needs of institutions.

Produce Peddlers coordinates buyers and producers through an app and next-day delivery to the buyer. Their business expanded our distribution network and client services with improved technological capabilities. We helped support Produce Peddlers by linking them to institutional partners as well as funding refrigeration for their delivery trucks. Eden Valley's transparency and volume of produce and Produce Peddlers technology were keys to being awarded the bid for the Pandion Local Foods Pilot Program.

The BNMC project helped ten farmers become certified by the USDA in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified throughout the grant. Healthcare institutions need safety vetting before they can consider taking on new sources of produce. The GAP certification allows purchasers in healthcare to be assured produce is safe for the immunocompromised population they serve.

Connections were fostered with the greater public through CSA (community-supported agriculture) programs and farmers markets established on campus. Meeting farmers and learning about their offerings is the best way to enhance growth while meeting the needs of the community at large. For example, one CSA program made subsidized shares available for 20 low-income families.

10 Farmers Were
USDA GAP
Certified During
The Grant Period



Key Learnings and What's Next

COVID-19 Specific Projects with Community Partners



Groundwork Market Garden is a family-owned farm on the East Side of Buffalo that received funds to develop and promote a digital catalog of aggregated local farm products available for purchase. This digital catalog will be used to secure business with larger institutions that small farms traditionally do not serve due to volume and specification limitations. GMG plans to include all local urban growers in the catalog to procure larger contracts and promote local farms. This supported the F2I objective of increasing small farmers and growers' access to large institutional markets.

Buffalo Go Green/Urban Fruits & Veggies is an urban agriculture business with two urban farms and a mobile produce market focused on providing healthy food access and nutrition education to underserved communities and healthcare clinics. Due to the pandemic, they grew three times as much as normal to support requests for food delivery and needed refrigeration equipment which BNMC could supply. This supported BNMC's objective of increasing small farmers and growers' access to large institutional markets.

St. John's Baptist Church is a neighbor to the BNMC hospitals. The church operates God's Food Pharmacy Mobile Truck, a mobile food truck and raised garden initiative that distributes free hot meals and produce to underserved neighborhood residents surrounding the medical campus. Funds were used to add refrigeration to the truck, allowing them to increase access to fresh foods. This supports BNMC's objective of increasing consumer knowledge and awareness of the benefits of fresh local healthy foods.

Key Learnings and What's Next

Professional Development and Conferences

The work of the Farm to Hospital Initiative was propelled by learning from and fostering connections with best practice organizations nationwide. The project team attended and presented at conferences, conducted site visits in major US cities, and sought educational experiences throughout the grant. As the program developed, the BNMC was able to organize our own educational events.

- Partnership Visits: to Boston, New York City, and Cleveland.
- At the Boston Medical Center, we talked with David Matteo who was instrumental in bringing a therapeutic food pantry and Veggie Prescription program sourced from their vast rooftop farm.
- At God's Love We Deliver in NYC (New York City) and Community Servings in Boston we saw the interworking of Medically Tailored Meal production and delivery programs at the largest scale.
- At Tufts Friedman School of Public Health, we conversed with Dr. Kurt Hager and Dr. Fang Fang Zang on their population-based studies to investigate the role of nutrition in disease prevention, and at Rethink Food we toured an innovative non-profit bridging the gap between excess food and the communities who need it.
- At University Hospitals we saw the culinary medicine program in partnership with Case Western Reserve University, as well as the Food for Life Market within the University Hospital system, delivering meals and fresh groceries to patients in need.
- In 2021 and 2022, BNMC convened the BNMC Annual Food as Medicine Symposium, engaging local healthcare clinicians and public health practitioners on best practice models, evidence-based research, and policy solutions to accelerate the adoption of medically tailored meals and food prescription programs into regular methods of care and to emphasize the link between or food supply and public health. The Symposia received major sponsorship from our partner organizations, featured national and local expert panelists, and gathered attendees from public health and community partners, Medical School faculty and students, public health and dietetic students, and community members.



Annual BNMC Food as Medicine Symposium

Key Learnings and What's Next

Other Key Lessons Learned



Relationship Building

The importance of relationship building cannot be understated. Without engaged partners and champions coordinating work at all levels, long-lasting food system and procurement changes cannot be possible. There are three main stakeholder-engagement groups this initiative relied on to be successful:

Since 2018, the Healthy Food in Health Care Work Council meetings brought together agri-businesses, community non-profit, and institutional stakeholders for networking, collaboration, and educational opportunities. This group is currently over 100+ stakeholders strong.

In 2020, the BNMC set up a smaller working group called the Healthy Foods Steering Committee, a multi-institutional group composed of C-suite executives, physicians, academics, and community activists to engage in high-level, strategic initiatives in line with BNMC grant objectives and overall mission. This Committee demonstrates the relationship-building the BNMC has accomplished, and the commitment institutional champions have toward supplying healthy, local foods to everyone on campus.

Key Learnings and What's Next

Other Key Lessons Learned



Reaching the Community - With the success of the BNMCH Food As Medicine Symposium, in 2022 we established a Western New York Food as Medicine Coalition engaging urban farmers, government, community-based organizations, clinicians, and payers to coordinate food access program delivery, implementation, research, and advocacy in the Western New York region. This helped ensure this work was happening in the community and beyond the institutions' walls.

Community Engagement - Institutions are often perceived as impenetrable and inaccessible by their surrounding communities. Throughout the grant period, the partners worked to begin to change that perception by positioning the institution as a place for food access where community members could purchase a healthy meal.

Institutional Policy Versus Practice - When procurement policy language changes, it is critical that additional time and effort is put behind the scenes into building a runway for new practices to be communicated and adopted by entire food service teams. The Pandion Regional Food Service Committee worked on opening procurement contracts to be more inclusive. The group quickly learned how beneficial it would have been to communicate and ensure practice changes carried through consistently into the workflows of the food service teams.

Key Learnings and What's Next

Looking Foward

The BNMC Farm to Hospital Initiative has built-in longevity and growth potential due to its unique approach of inclusive engagement and relationship building. BNMC remains committed to being a partner to our food system, our institutions, and our neighbors to improve the health of the people, the economy, and the environment.

Here are our recommendations to various partners because of our learning outcomes from this work:

For Institutions:

- Continued commitment to local procurement and sustainability efforts to support institutional priorities in community health; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- It is recommended institutions build upon the relationships and culture of healthy food made in Farm to Hospital with programs that have demonstrated success in other healthcare anchors:
- Transfer local procurement and health-focused language into vending and catering contracts,
- Implement food insecurity screenings with referrals/prescriptions for produce, grocery delivery, or farm boxes,
- Host cooking classes in a "teaching kitchen" to incorporate culinary medicine and show patients how to prepare healthy delicious meals.
- A rooftop or community garden to educate patients, provide beautification in a clinical setting, and grow food for a hospital farm box/therapeutic food pantry program.
- Marketing teams can use the existing Local Foods Marketing Campaign as a template to implement, develop, and expand the campaign to include additional local produce items.
- Food Service teams can continue to use the tracking software for produce and can expand local procurement to other food categories, including meats, dairy, eggs, and grains.



Key Learnings and What's Next

Looking Foward

For regional food supply chain partners (farmers, distributors, processors):

- WNY region is in dire need of more local processors to meet the specifications of institutional food. Food system partners need to continue working together by exploring cooperative models for production, harvesting, and distribution to increase farm capacity and resiliency, and further develop the infrastructure of the local supply chain.
- Additional advocacy and representation from the production sector are needed to continue building capacity for the farm-to-table movement throughout Western New York. Farmers, producers, processors, and distributors need to get involved with the local coalitions and community advocacy groups that work towards building capacity and supporting these initiatives.
- To make a meaningful impact and effect long-term change in health disparities and health outcomes, food system stakeholders must invite and ensure BIPOC producers, farmers, and food business owners are included in every step of informing and implementing this work.
- Pandion should consider the opportunity for its Local Farm Fresh Produce Committee to work with Kaleida Health to align their contracts and procurement specifications to capitalize on cost-sharing and co-location to further incentivize purchasing at volume in-season from local farms.



Key Learnings and What's Next

Looking Foward

For Elected Officials in Buffalo, Erie County, and New York State:

- The Food system touches every industry and aspect of society yet is not regulated or monitored by any one governing body. Policymakers play an important role in the:
- Protecting farmland from development pressures.
- Ensuring the Farm Bill increases farm viability and helps farmers combat climate change.
- Supporting policies that emphasize values-based procurement, such as the Good Food New York Bill.
- Continued advocacy and support of healthy food efforts being championed by community coalitions, including the Buffalo Erie Food Policy Council, Good Food Purchasing Program, and the Western New York Food As Medicine Coalition.



Partner Feedback

Kaleida Health and BNM have been working together since Metz Culinary was contracted for foodservice. The BNMC Team has been an instrumental part in implementation and follow through on our Farm to Hospital initiatives. The team has supported us every step of the way and has helped us get fresh, locally sourced produce to our patients and staff members"

*Zach Gidwitz,
Metz Culinary
Systems General
Manager*

Our Farm to Hospital program, developed with the help of BNMC, allows us to provide fresh, high nutritional value food to our patients and staff to enhance their nutritional needs and aid in healing. Since all farms are local, it provides economic support to the local economy. The program also provides educational opportunities for our chefs and foodservice personnel to learn about growth and production, packaging, and delivery from farm to hospital.

*Hank Cole,
Senior Director
of Operations at
Kaleida Health*

These past few years have certainly been different, and it has been great to have our partnership with BNMC to help keep our Farm To Hospital Program moving forward. Their support has been invaluable during a time when our energies as operators were pulled in so many different directions. I look forward to our continued partnership and the successes awaiting us.

*Christina Dibble,
Director, Nutrition and
Food Services, Roswell
Park*

BNMC was an instrumental partner in developing the Pandion Regional Local Food Pilot Program. They worked with the subcommittee of Foodservice Directors to develop the special terms and conditions necessary to assure transparency of the program. With BNMC's resources and knowledge, Pandion was able to build a very thoughtful and competitive agreement for our members in Western New York.

*Terry Overshire,
Director of Food
Service and Business
Development, Pandion
Organizational
Alliance.*

BNMC has been an invaluable partner in helping Produce Peddlers achieve our goals of connecting local farms directly to hospitals and institutions. We are very excited to partake in a pilot Farm to Hospital program with the Pandion Group which was initially facilitated by the BNMC. We look forward to seeing this program expand across New York State in the years to come!

*Gina Wiezorek, Co-
Owner, Produce
Peddlers*

The BNMC Healthy Food Steering Committee has been critical in spearheading wellness and food as medicine across Great Lakes Health and the Campus. Initiatives include farm to table produce for local community and healthcare providers, creative ways of bringing healthy options to busy providers using vending options, improved education, and education to our health science students.

As we embark on risk sharing and work to improve population health and community engagement, the BNMC has been the leader for positive change and collaboration.

*Dr. Kenneth Snyder, VP Chief
Physician Quality Officer at
Kaleida and Professor of
Neurology at UB*

I have enjoyed working with BNMC for years on various projects. They have been instrumental in the development of our Farmers & Artisans FarmHouse Fridge Program. We continue to work together to expand locations and market local food and healthy food option goals. Agriculturally, the BNMC has supported our regional rural and urban small farms through education, product support and business connections. Having a link to the BNMC community has become an important component of my families' farm and retail business.

*Julie Blackman, Owner/Operator,
Farmers & Artisans/Blackman
Homestead Farm*



BNMC
HEALTH & WELL-BEING

BNMC Farm To
Hospital

Impact Report

