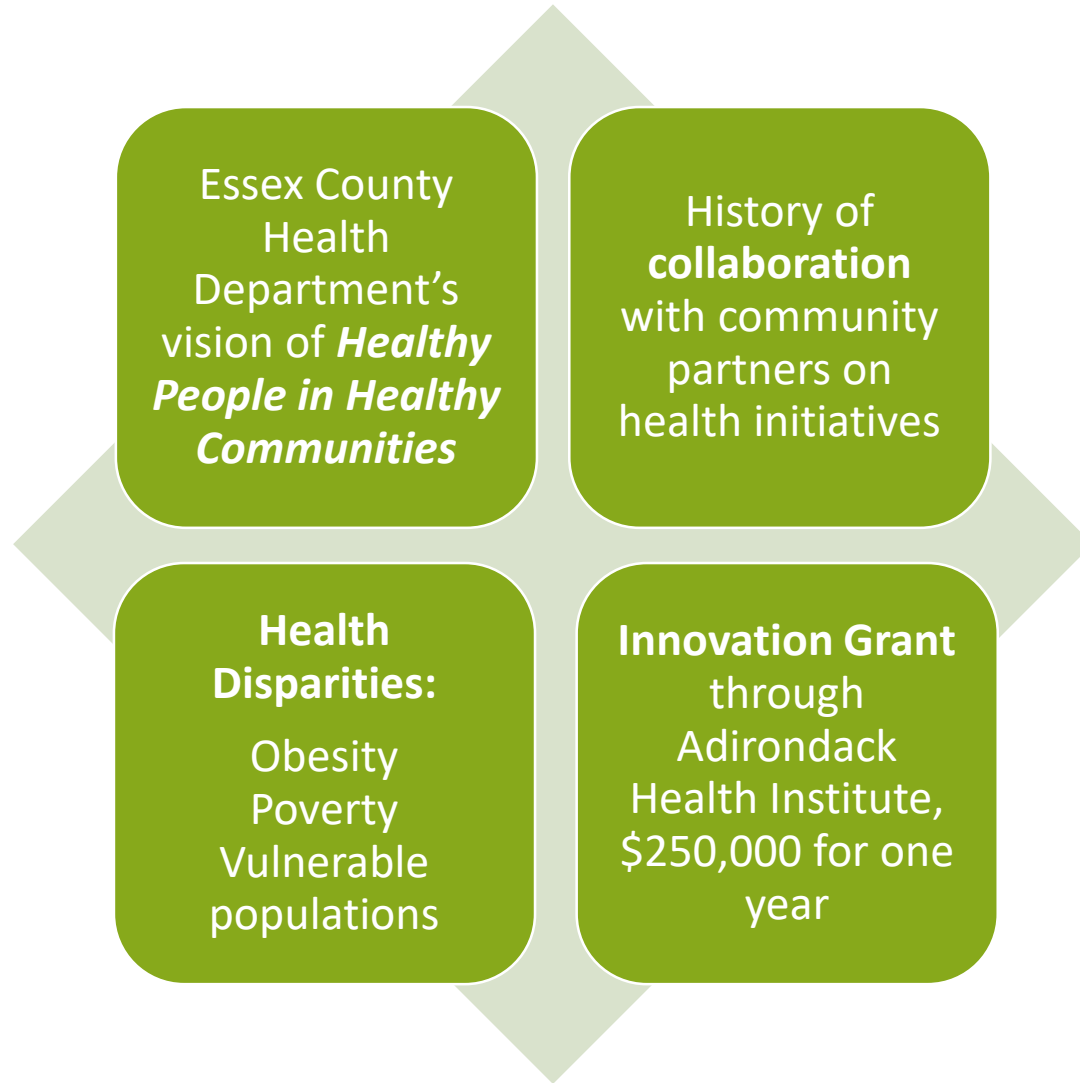




# WELLNESS RX

A Component of an Integrated Approach to Improving Local Access to Fresh Foods

# HOW DID WE GET HERE?



## Essex County Health Disparities

- **Obesity:** 7,743 children (0-18) live in Essex County, 21.4% have a current Body Mass Index in the 95th percentile or higher. The New York State average is 17.3% leaving Essex County markedly higher than the state. (2017 US Census)
- **Poverty:** 38,598 people live in Essex County, 10.1% live in poverty.
- **Vulnerable populations:** Seek to further initiatives that serve all residents of Essex County with a focus on engaging the most vulnerable populations (children, the elderly, veterans, and low- income residents).



# WELL FED ESSEX COUNTY FOCUS PROJECTS



Farmacy



Wellness Rx



Food Pantry Conversion



WIC & SNAP Navigation



Better Choice Retailers

# DESIRED OUTCOMES IDENTIFIED

## Conditions

- Increase access to local, wholesome foods & goods
- Increase number of WIC vendors
- Increase educational opportunities (shopping & food preparation)
- Reduce stigma

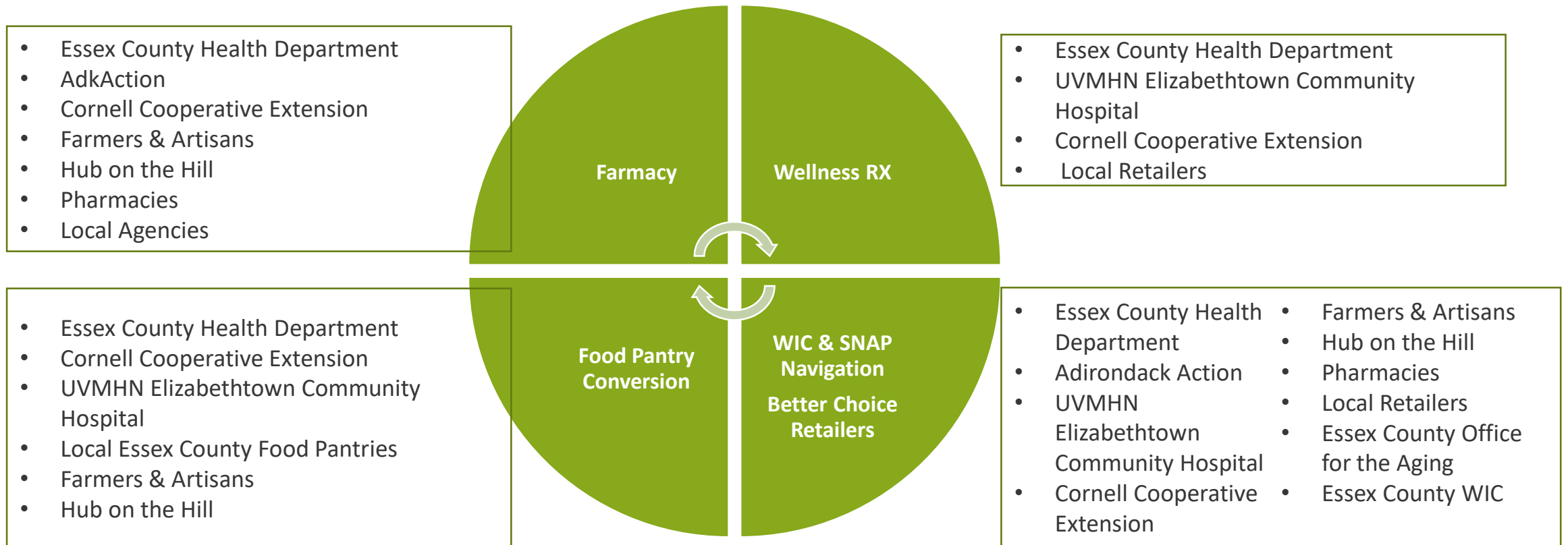
## Systems

- Improve connections
- Enhance food procurement
- Increase enrollment in WIC & SNAP
- Increase provider referrals to wholesome nutrition & food security

## Capacity

- Increase partner engagement & awareness
- Increase partner understanding of how member organizations contribute to social conditions
- Improve partner efficacy to collectively solve problems based in SDOH

# WORKING TOGETHER TO INCREASE ACCESS TO WHOLESOME NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY



Building on what works. Whole bigger than sum of parts



# THE FARMACY PROJECT

Improving community health outcomes for vulnerable populations by increasing access to affordable, locally-produced food, with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, and reducing rural isolation by building community connections around food.

- Improving existing location and expanding to one additional location in Essex County.
- Creating a toolkit to make replication easier in other communities.
- Applying to accept SNAP, WIC, and other nutrition incentive programs like FMNP and Wellness RX to make food options accessible to all populations.
- Providing cooking classes and nutrition education to increase awareness on how to cook with local fruits and vegetables.







# Food Pantry Conversion

- Developing a Service Plan - Who, What, When, Where, and Why?
- Establishing Community Support
- Non-Profit Status
- Food Sources
- Budgeting
- Volunteers
- Marketing and Referrals
- Equipment and Forms
- Client Choice



# BETTER CHOICE RETAILER PROGRAM



Increasing access, availability and marketing of healthy food choices in Clinton, Essex and Franklin Counties.

## Essex County Better Choice Retailers

- Keeseville Pharmacy, Keeseville
- Village Meat Market, Willsboro
- Ernie's Market and Deli, Westport
- Mineville Rexall, Mineville\*
- Denton's Bear Necessities, Lewis\*
- Ticonderoga Natural Foods Co-op, Ticonderoga\*
- Hub on the Hill, Essex
- Sullivan's Store, Olmsteadville
- Valley Grocery, Keene Valley



\* These Better Choice Retailers are managed through the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities of Clinton and Essex County initiative.



# WIC and SNAP Navigation

## Why WIC and SNAP?

- Currently 5 vendors accepting WIC in Essex County (of 18 towns)
- Only 60% of eligible families are enrolled.
- About 40% of WIC dollars distributed go unspent.
- WIC recently transitioned to an electronic system which is more attractive to potential vendors and participants.
- SNAP has been shown to reduce healthcare costs among recipients.
- Many eligible seniors are not enrolled in SNAP.

## What is the Well Fed Essex County Collaborative doing?

- Cooking demonstrations for food pantry and WIC recipients.
- Surveying WIC participants and conducting a focus group to identify and solve potential barriers to utilization.
- Assisting in coordinating local farm donations to WIC and food pantries.
- Supporting Essex County Office for the Aging in becoming a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program vendor to accept SNAP for Meals on Wheels and congregate meals.
- Providing funding to assist outreach workers in providing SNAP and WIC application assistance at Essex County food pantries and other locations.







# WELLNESS RX

The mission of Wellness RX is to increase affordable access to healthy produce in efforts to decrease chronic disease within our community. Wellness RX has been created as a six month program designed to provide nutritional education to participants, as well as vouchers for fresh produce.



# OVERVIEW

What is a Wellness RX?

- The cheapest foods available can cause diet related disease. A Wellness RX is a referral program that incorporates a holistic approach through nutrition and vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables. Studies have shown a significant impact on chronic disease through diet modification. Through participation with a Wellness RX, we are addressing the dietary crisis throughout our community.

What does the patient experience look like?

- 1. Patients are recruited by health care providers to participate in the program.
- 2. Participants must attend Wellness Visits to receive nutrition education.
- 3. Participants will receive vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables at each visit and are encouraged to participate in pre and post evaluations.
- 4. Participants will redeem vouchers for fresh, nutritious foods at participating retailers.



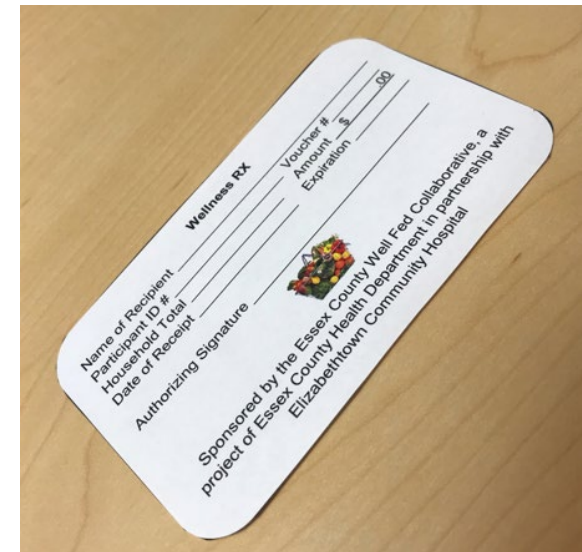
# WELLNESS RX TEAM

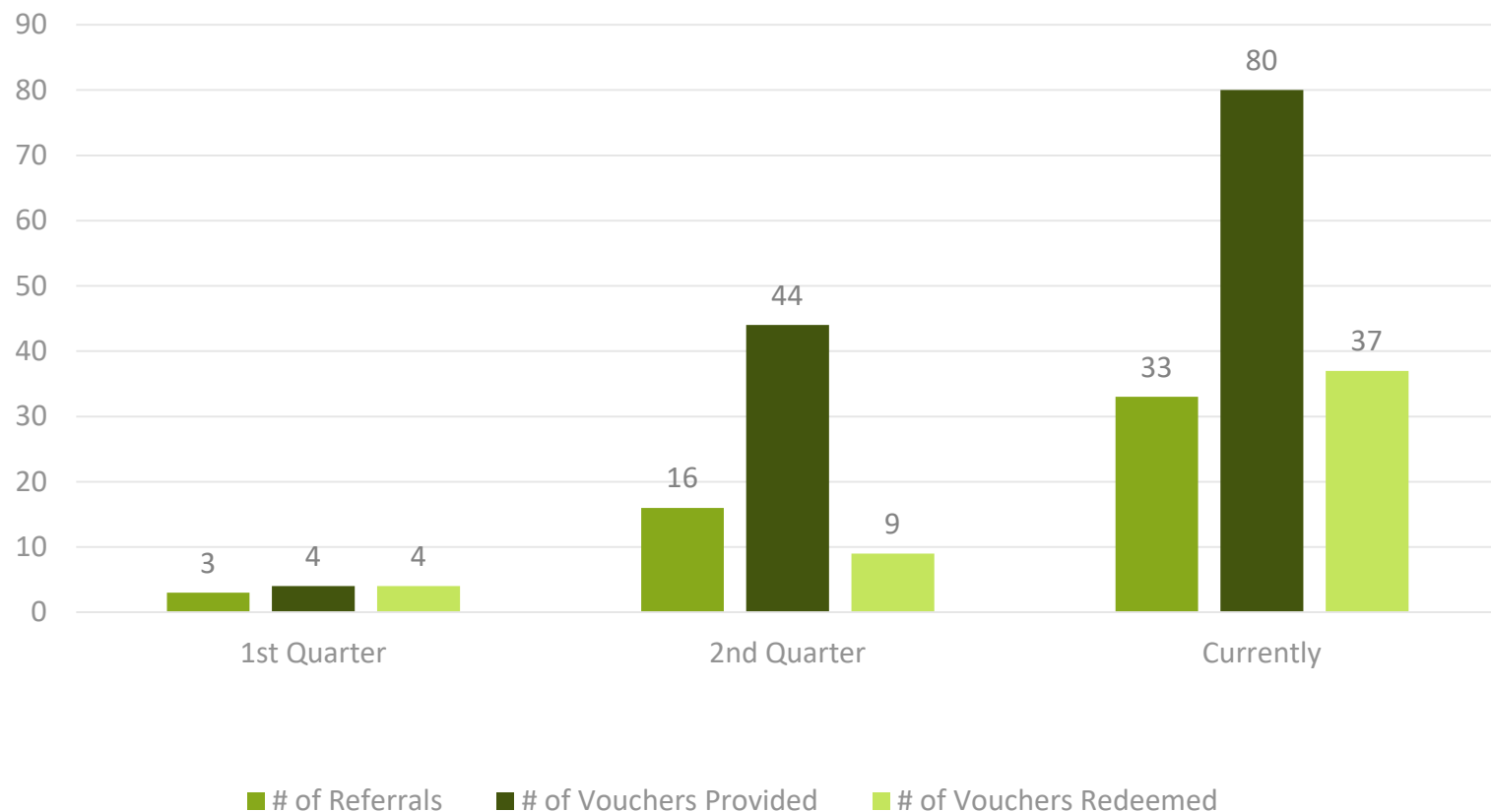




# LESSONS LEARNED

- Allow plenty of time to prepare for program launch
- Include all partners in strategic planning
- Identify what success look like
- Set guidelines for voucher redemption
- Schedule monthly check-ins with all partners following program launch
- Produce is not always accessible – allow for variations





# SUCCESS

“BEFORE, I ATE POTATO CHIPS WHILE WATCHING TV, NOW I EAT CARROT STICKS IN MY RECLINER”

WELLNESS RX PARTICIPANT





# SUSTAINABILITY

- Implementation of System Level Changes
- Continuation of Quarterly Collaborative Meetings
- Collaborative Sustainability Committee
- Community Support and Outreach
- Hospital Auxiliary Support
- Grant Funding

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