



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Food Bank Receives \$25,000 Medline CARES donation so families can access fresh food – Rx Mobile program highlights growth of ‘food as medicine’

Geneva, IL, March 13, 2023 – A new \$25,000 Medline CARES donation is helping to support the Food Bank’s *Build Healthy Communities Screen and Intervene* initiative, working alongside healthcare organizations to address the need for nutritious food for patients identified as food-insecure. To date, Medline has donated \$75,000 towards the initiative.

More than 200 families and individuals will shop from the Food Bank initiative’s Rx Mobile food delivery vehicle from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 21 at Erie HealthReach Waukegan Health Center, 2323 Grand Ave, Waukegan, IL 60085.

Erie patients and families at the Rx Mobile event will each select about 45 pounds of food, including a mix of meat, dairy, fruits and vegetable as well as other items. In addition to the Food Bank and Erie Family Health staff, representatives from local nonprofits Keeping Families Covered and Northwest Palliative Care will also provide services during the Rx Mobile event.

“Access to fresh, nutritious food is at the center of health and hunger. Initiatives like our Rx Mobiles and our partnerships with healthcare, social service, and community-based organizations provide the nutritious foods and nutrition education our neighbors need to thrive,” says Kathleen Wendt, Manager of Healthy Communities and Senior Programs, Northern Illinois Food Bank.

“Medline is honored to support organizations like Northern Illinois Food Bank that are thinking holistically about health equity among those who are most marginalized,” says Karen Frey, Senior Philanthropy Manager, Medline. “We’re excited to see them lead the way in partnering with other agencies to provide much-needed services in a coordinated and convenient way for residents and our communities.”

Staff and healthcare providers at Erie Family Health say the program serves an important need for their patients. “Overall, we see better health outcomes when our patients facing hunger get fresh fruits, veggies, milk, eggs, and protein food,” says Erie’s Social Determinants of Health Manager Lacey Johnson, MPH. “The Mobile Rx has been an exceptional resource for our patients, especially those with chronic health conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes.”

About the program

Food and nutrition security means having reliable access to enough high-quality food to avoid hunger and stay healthy, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Improving access to nutritious food supports overall health, reduces chronic diseases, and helps people avoid unnecessary health care. That’s why food and nutrition security is one of the key [social determinants of health](#), according to the CDC.

Since its inception in 2019, the Northern Illinois Food Bank’s *Build Healthy Communities Screen and Intervene* program has proven the worth of food as medicine, as health providers shift to holistic healthcare and focus on patients’ surroundings as well as their physical ailments. Through the program, patients are screened for food insecurity at their medical providers’ offices through a two-question Hunger Vital Sign Screening Tool regarding their access to and ability to afford food.

Those who screen positive receive a voucher to participate in the program, which includes the Rx Mobiles as well as hospital-based food pantries, an online food pantry (My Pantry Express) and Rx Markets which use the same food as medicine approach along with additional services at fixed locations.

The Rx Mobile program is convenient for many people since it takes place periodically at the clinics or hospitals where they already receive care. The program takes place at five locations in Lake County.

It’s also popular among patients: “I love hosting the food bank at Erie because it’s nice to see so many families’ needs being met and I get to interact with the community,” says Kaled Cortes, a Care Coordinator at Erie Health Reach Waukegan who helps plan and execute the Rx Mobile events. “The event has also been rewarding in seeing families be happy and smiling because they’re going to have food to eat.”

For more information about Rx Mobiles and Northern Illinois Food Bank programs, visit: SolveHungerToday.org.

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ABOUT THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK

For the past 40 years, Northern Illinois Food Bank has been dedicated to solving hunger and empowering neighbors. Our vision at [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) is for everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and proud member of [Feeding America](#), we serve our neighbors in 13 counties with dignity, equity and convenience, providing 250,000 meals a day. We bring together manufacturers, local and corporate grocers, area farmers, corporations, foundations, and individuals who donate food and funding, and each week nearly 1,000 volunteers help us evaluate, repack, and distribute food. We also proudly partner with more than 900 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and youth and senior feeding programs to provide nutritious food and resources. Our distribution centers are located in Geneva, Lake Forest, Rockford and Joliet. Find out how you can [get help](#), [volunteer](#), [donate](#) or [get involved](#) at [SolveHungerToday.org](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT MEDLINE

Medline is a healthcare company; a manufacturer, distributor, and solutions provider focused on improving the overall operating performance of healthcare. Partnering with healthcare systems and facilities across the continuum of care, Medline provides the clinical and supply chain resources required for long-term financial viability in delivering high-quality care. With the scale of one of the country's largest companies and the agility of a family-led business, Medline is able to invest in its customers for the future and rapidly respond to a dynamically changing market with customized solutions. Headquartered in Northfield, Ill., Medline has 34,000+ employees worldwide and does business in more than 125 countries and territories. Learn more about Medline at www.medline.com.