

In a recent article [“Some Hospitals Prescribe Food, Take Other Steps to Fight Food Insecurity”](#), a handful of hospitals and health systems have taken steps in their communities to address the problem of hunger and food insecurity. This comes at a time when there is a great need as millions of Americans live in food-insecure households. According to a recent study by [Bread of the World](#) in 2014, hunger and food insecurity drove up U.S health expenditures by \$160 billion.

Last December, the IRS finalized a rule on the actions nonprofit hospitals can take to improve local community health beyond charity care to preserve their nonprofit tax status. Facilitating access to nutrition and addressing food insecurity was one of these actions. Addressing social determinants of health, including access to adequate nutrition and nutrition services for people in the community is essential to maintaining health for all persons. This article highlights the ongoing work of Boston Medical Center physicians, who have now begun to write prescriptions for food when patients don't have enough to eat. We know firsthand at God's Love that a prescription is not enough, which is why BMC's in-hospital food bank, which helps patients fill their prescription for free, is such a huge forward step.

Easing a patient's transition back to the community through food and nutrition support is key to reducing avoidable hospitalizations. For those who are less high-risk and are able to cook for themselves, food pantries like BMC's are critical. For those who are more vulnerable, medically tailored home-delivered meals, like those we provide at God's Love, are better. By supporting clients along the Food and Nutrition Services Continuum of Care, together we can prevent individuals from returning to the hospital because they are malnourished. We believe this firmly, which is why we are heavily involved in the New York State Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment ([DSRIP](#)) project, because the service we provide play an integral role in the project goal of driving down avoidable hospitalizations by 25%. Together hospitals and food and nutrition services providers can make a difference in the lives of our clients and move the needle on national healthcare costs.

Click this link to see our graphic describing the Food and Nutrition Services Continuum of Care.

