

In the work to become the healthiest nation, the medical system can't do it all on its own. We have to expand our partnerships to collaborate with city planners, education officials, public, private and for-profit organizations – everyone who has an impact on our health. For God's Love, these collaborations start and end with a focus on access to nutritious food.

We work locally to expand our impact on community health by continuously evolving our programs to better serve our clients and our community. This acknowledges choices that promote sustainability for the future. Part of this commitment includes growing the amount of our produce that is locally sourced. Much of this effort is accomplished through collaborations with other similarly minded organizations.

Growth in this area has gained momentum over several years, starting with a connection to a local CSA and an urban farm. Today, we source even a greater percentage of our produce locally, through our connection to [Greemarket Co.](#), the wholesale arm of [GrowNYC](#). This is a win-win situation for our clients, local producers and for the environment. With this relationship flourishing, we are now exploring additional opportunities to increase access to locally grown produce for our community of staff and volunteers.

The push for partnerships and collaboration for public health must extend beyond our local sourcing to collaborations on the national level. We see our services for people that are too sick to shop or cook for themselves as part of a much broader continuum of care that supports individuals from prevention through treatment (see the image above). You can see that all the interventions listed are critical to supporting health at each stage, yet because they all have different funding streams, outcomes and goals, it is often hard for the nonprofits and agencies engaged in this work to connect with one another. These connections must occur if we are going to have a coordinated response to malnutrition in our country.

There are areas where we are making progress. In February, God's Love was part of a panel discussing the relationship between nutrition and health and implications for healthcare policy at the [National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference](#). What was so remarkable about the conference was how the anti-hunger world is beginning to embrace the idea that food is also medicine. Through the breakthrough work of people like [Dr. Hillary Seligman](#) and the innovative research like the [Feeding America diabetes pilot](#), the #foodismedicine message is making an impact for people *before* they are too sick to shop or cook for themselves. It is collaborations like these that will help make us the healthiest nation in one generation.

