

Tennessee Monthly Update

October

UnitedHealthcare Awards Special Olympics Tennessee \$20,000 to Benefit Healthy Initiatives Program

UnitedHealthcare and Special Olympics Tennessee celebrated their partnership, which supports the Healthy Initiatives program, during the opening ceremony for the state flag football event in Nashville on October 5.

The Healthy Initiatives program delivers free health services, including health screenings, and information to Special Olympics athletes. It also provides training to health professionals.



UnitedHealthcare Community Plan President and CEO, Keith Payet, announcing the partnership and unveiling the new Healthy Initiatives logo during the opening ceremony.



Volunteers stocking the Northaven Elementary refrigerated pantry unit for Thanksgiving.

Stocking Up on Healthy Foods

On October 8, UnitedHealthcare sponsored a Mid-South Food Bank mobile food pantry distribution and a healthy cooking class with Chef Donald Nichols as part of the Empowering Health initiative.

Alongside representatives from Healthy Kids and Teens and the Mid-South Food Bank, UnitedHealthcare provided nearly 300 attendees with food at Northaven Elementary in Memphis. Each attendee also received a robust sampling of the food from the demonstration by Chef Donald Nichols, a cookbook, and a UnitedHealthcare ruler for students to use in school.

Beyond the food distribution and demonstration, a portion of the Empowering Health grant provided to the Mid-South Food Bank provided refrigerated pantry units for Northaven Elementary. After the event, there were 25 food boxes remaining, which were among the first items stocked in the units for distribution around Thanksgiving.

Helping People Live Healthier Lives

UnitedHealthcare, in collaboration with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee and Healthy Tennessee, hosted a health fair and food distribution event on October 12 in Nashville.

Supported by a \$75,000 grant from UnitedHealthcare to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, volunteers from these organizations and the Jackson Street Church of Christ distributed fresh produce and shelf-stable food to approximately 400 individuals. Attendees of the event were also invited to get free health screenings.



UnitedHealthcare presenting the grant to Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee.

Meeting Social Needs and Addressing Social Determinants of Health

By Sarah Glasheen, Senior Director, Policy and Strategic Initiatives

It is widely acknowledged that health is impacted by far more than just medical care. Housing status, access to healthy foods, ability to secure reliable transportation, and many other social and economic factors play an enormous role in overall health and well-being. In fact, every week I come across a myriad of articles, panel discussions, webinars, and research studies referencing programs and interventions that address the social determinants of health. Or are they social needs?

While the concepts of “social determinants of health” and “social needs” are not new, the terms are now broadly accepted across the health care community. Often the phrases are used interchangeably, which can be problematic as discussed in the recent Health Affairs blog Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short Of Addressing Social Determinants of Health and The Milbank Quarterly’s Meanings and Misunderstandings: A Social Determinants of Health Lexicon for Health Care Systems.

Although both issues are incredibly complex, the difference can be simplified to an individual (social needs) versus a community (social determinants) level.

Addressing the social needs of an individual and the social determinants of a community require different approaches, partnerships, and innovations. Programs that provide food, temporary housing, and transportation are necessary to address immediate social needs. However, efforts that look upstream and attempt to address the systemic factors driving the needs in the first place are also critical.

At UnitedHealthcare, we are committed to ongoing learning and engagement in the communities in which we have the privilege to serve. We continue to develop relevant programs and strategies that support our members. With the connection to positive health outcomes so clearly linked to one’s social needs, we continue to look for ways to align community and government partners in identifying and addressing both the social needs and the social determinants facing our families and communities.

To learn more about social needs and addressing social determinants of health, read the full blog post at UHCCS.com.

For more information about UnitedHealthcare’s involvement in your community, contact:

✉ keith_c_payet@uhc.com ☎ 1-615-493-9614