

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Wellness West and Instacart Share Results from First Year of Partnership to Tackle Food Insecurity on Chicago's West Side**

***Program Results Include Improvements in Diabetes Management, Blood Pressure and Mental Health for Participants***

***600+ Under-Resourced Chicagoans Now Benefiting from Monthly Grocery Stipend***

CHICAGO (Dec. 12, 2024) – [Wellness West](#), a coalition of Chicago's health and social service institutions, and [Instacart](#) (Nasdaq: CART), the leading grocery technology company in North America, announced results of the first year of a partnership to leverage the scale and convenience of technology to address food insecurity and improve health outcomes for more than 600 patients on the West Side of Chicago.

Through the partnership, Wellness West's Food Connections program offers eligible participants a monthly grocery stipend of \$79, delivered through [Instacart Health Fresh Funds](#), that can be used to purchase nutritious foods like fresh and frozen produce for delivery or pickup via Instacart. The digital stipend can be combined with other food benefit programs, like SNAP or eligible supplemental health benefits, allowing patients to complete their full shop in one order, creating a more convenient and accessible grocery shopping experience.

In the first year of the Instacart program, more than 600 Wellness West patients have enrolled. Clinical health outcomes observed, measured by Wellness West on September 6, 2024, include:

- 49% of patients with diabetes improved their hemoglobin A1c levels.
- 59% of patients with hypertension improved their blood pressure rate.
- 7% of patients with depression had an improvement in their symptoms.

Additional results include:

- 86% of all orders are delivered, and 14% are pickup orders. This underscores how important delivery is to a community that often lacks reliable transportation.
- The most frequently purchased items are necessities; over 66% of orders contained fresh produce, and 29% of orders contained water.
- 13% of users also used EBT SNAP funds to supplement their Fresh Funds when placing orders.
- 87% of all orders are from repeat users, which shows encouraging evidence of widespread adoption after the initial sign-up and high engagement of users.

“We are very pleased with this first year of our partnership with Instacart,” said Misty Drake, Executive Director, Wellness West. “Food insecurity is among the most devastating of all the social drivers of health, and more than a third of our patients suffer from it. That’s why this partnership with Instacart is so important.”

“Our partnership with Wellness West demonstrates the impact technology can have on breaking down barriers to access and combatting food insecurity,” said Sarah Mastrorocco, Vice President and General Manager of Instacart Health. “We’re proud of the impact our partnership has made to participants in the West Side of Chicago. We look forward to continuing to leverage our technology to help those struggling with food access.”

*View Wellness West’s five-minute video on food insecurity:*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGVoeE0Yr2k&t=4s>

### ***Food Insecurity: A Critical Vulnerability for Chicago’s Most At Risk***

Food insecurity can be caused by job loss, lack of transportation or health issues. Lack of access to healthy food is associated with a higher risk for hypertension, heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, diabetes and arthritis. Many Chicagoans are only one paycheck away from facing food insecurity. Of the more than 35,000 Health Risk Assessments conducted by Wellness West in the last three years, 37% screened positive for food insecurity. Wellness West will continue the Food Connections program leveraging Instacart Health’s Fresh Funds technology over the next two years. In 2025 the program aims to support 1,000 West Side community members.

According to the [Chicago Food Equity Agenda](#), 19% of people in the Chicago metro region are food insecure. That figure rises to 29% in majority-Latinx communities and 37% in majority-Black communities.

### ***Wellness West Food Connections: An Extensive, Inclusive Program***

The partnership with Instacart is a crucial component of Wellness West’s Food Connections benefit program for its qualified patients. Food Connections also includes Wellness West partner organizations – such as Breakthrough, Bethel New Life, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Rush University Medical Center, United for Better Living, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago and others – that offer benefits such as food pantries, online markets, monthly food distributions, grocery store food vouchers, meals for youth and children, assistance with SNAP and WIC applications, health screenings and nutrition consultations, and home delivery of groceries to Wellness West patients and others in need.

### ***Instacart Health Fresh Funds: An Impactful Model***

Instacart Health Fresh Funds has been successfully implemented in communities across the country through Instacart’s partnerships with healthcare and nonprofit organizations nationwide.

**About Wellness West**

Wellness West is the coming together of proven, well-respected hospitals, community health centers, community behavioral health centers and social service organizations on the West Side. Through this collaboration, Wellness West is creating a transformational continuity of care to address some of the most pressing health issues such as hypertension, diabetes, severe mental illness and substance use disorder. The program is focused on the vulnerable populations within 10 key zip codes on the West Side and takes a holistic approach by addressing all the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) a person may face, including food insecurity. Wellness West is funded by an initiative of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services to invest in closing gaps in care and increasing health equity for Illinois. For more information, visit [www.wellnesswest.org](http://www.wellnesswest.org).

**About Instacart**

Instacart, the leading grocery technology company in North America, works with grocers and retailers to transform how people shop. The company partners with more than 1,500 national, regional, and local retail banners to facilitate online shopping, delivery and pickup services from more than 85,000 stores across North America on the Instacart Marketplace. Instacart makes it possible for millions of people to get the groceries they need from the retailers they love, and for approximately 600,000 Instacart shoppers to earn by picking, packing and delivering orders on their own flexible schedule. The Instacart Platform offers retailers a suite of enterprise-grade technology products and services to power their e-commerce experiences, fulfill orders, digitize brick-and-mortar stores, provide advertising services, and glean insights. With Instacart Ads, thousands of CPG brands – from category leaders to emerging brands – partner with the company to connect directly with consumers online, right at the point of purchase. With Instacart Health, the company is providing tools to increase nutrition security, make healthy choices easier for consumers, and expand the role that food can play in improving health outcomes. For more information, visit [www.instacart.com/company](http://www.instacart.com/company), and to start shopping, visit [www.instacart.com](http://www.instacart.com). Maplebear Inc. is the registered corporate name of Instacart.

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