

Times-Herald

Solano's Mobile Food Pharmacy snags award

By [THE REPORTER](#) |

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Solano's "We're All Family! Mobile Food Pharmacy" has been chosen to receive a National Association of County Governments (NACo) National Achievement Award for Health at the NACo Annual Conference and Exposition in July.

The awards honor innovative, effective, county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

The program, funded by a grant from the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, delivers produce and healthy cooking resources to Family Health Services clinics throughout the county.

Healthy food options are prescribed, then "filled" at the food truck following their appointments.

The produce is provided by the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, whose employees stock, transport and deliver the goods.

"The launch of the Mobile Food Pharmacy is the first step towards the 'food as medicine' approach to show how food can help heal and prevent chronic diseases," said Erin Hannigan, District 1 Supervisor and chairwoman of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, in a press statement. "And now, being selected to receive the NACo National Achievement award means that our vision of creating a healthier and more vibrant Solano County is being recognized, acknowledged, and appreciated in the national spotlight."

The program nurtures health, advised Dr. Bela Matyas, Solano County Health Officer.

"People are more likely to make a behavior change if the recommendation comes from their healthcare provider, and this program takes advantage of this relationship," he said. "When providers talk to their patients about nutritious food options, it raises the role that nutrition plays in their overall health, which then encourages them to develop healthy eating habits."

Anthony Roberts, Yocha Dehe Tribal Chairman, expressed pride in being able to lend support.

“Like many tribes, Yocha Dehe experienced the impact of poor nutrition and hunger not that many years ago,” he pointed out. “Now, we are fortunate to be able to partner with Solano County on its work to combat this problem locally and we commend it for the program’s growing success.”

From March 2018 to January 2019, including an eight-month trial period, the program distributed more than 27,000 pounds of produce to nearly 2,000 patients. It’s anticipated that between 3,500 and 7,500 families will be served per year, possibly more as demand grows.

For more information on the Mobile Food Pharmacy program, visit http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/ph/fhs/mobile_food_pharmacy.asp.