Addressing Food Insecurity in Apache Junction: An Innovative & Community Centered Approach

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Physical Environment

- Eastern most community in the Phoenix-Mesa Metro area
- Bordered by Tonto National Forest
- Superstition Mountains
- 20 miles from Mesa; 36 miles from downtown Phoenix
Demographics

- Total population: 51,571
- More women than men
- Minimal ethnic diversity
- 18.8% live below 100% of Federal Poverty Line; 40.6% live below 200% of FPL (ADHS, 2019)
Health Status Data

- Birth defects-leading cause of death for infants
- Cardiac & pulmonary disease impacts adults
- Mortality rate 15.3% per 100,000 (CARES, 2020)
Food Insecurity in Apache Junction

- Pinal County Food Insecurity rate: 13.9%
- 1 in 6 adults & 1 in 4 children are affected
- Poor selection of grocery stores
Influential Community Factors

• Physical environment
• Economics, Housing, Income
• Communication
• Utilities
• Poverty
• Transportation
• Health care
Seniors

- Increased risk factors for food insecurity
- Many do not get their recommended intake of fruits & vegetables
- Nutrient deficiencies exacerbate chronic disease
Families

- Food insecurity increases oral health problems
- Spurs the development of chronic diseases
- Food insecurity impacts the whole family; especially pregnant women & children
Mental Health

- Digestive System is the "second brain"
- Neurotransmitter production
- Nutrient imbalances can impact mood, & cognitive function
Children

- Childhood food insecurity effects development
- More likely to be hospitalized for common childhood conditions
- Below average academic performance
- Increased anxiety, depression, and hyperactive behaviors
Pharmaceuticals & Nutrition

- Proper nutrition ensures medications are safe & effective
- Food/medication symbiosis
- Spending tradeoffs: Choosing between medicine & food
Public Health & Nutrition

- Individual & population health outcomes are effected
- $77.5 billion in excess annual health care expenditures (FRAC, 2017).
- Healthy People 2020 has added food insecurity to the initiative
Implications For Practice

- Nutritional Assessments
- Connecting individuals & families with community resources
- Ensuring compassionate & holistic care
References


References


Questions??