

PRESS RELEASE
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OPERATING FRANCES NELSON AND SMILEHEALTHY

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**Eastern Illinois Foodbank and Promise Healthcare Partner to
Open *Food as Medicine* Program at Health Center**

CHAMPAIGN- URBANA, IL — Eastern Illinois Foodbank has partnered with Promise Healthcare at two locations to start a *Food as Medicine* program, offering pantry staples to children and families in need.

A collaboration between EIF and the community health center, this program started in July and is supported by a grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation. The program has been operating for two months and uses a pre-packaged distribution model, providing individuals with food to last two to three days. Bags contain pantry staples like tuna, peanut butter, applesauce and macaroni & cheese. The program is designed to be an immediate source of emergency food for children and families struggling to afford an adequate diet for healthy living. Information about other local food pantries and soup kitchens is also shared with patients.

On average, 90 households per week are being served by the *Food as Medicine* program at Frances Nelson in Champaign and Promise Healthcare's satellite at the Community Resource Center in Urbana.

"We're thrilled about this partnership with Promise Healthcare," said Jim Hires, President and CEO of Eastern Illinois Foodbank. "We know that hunger and health are directly linked. Being able to provide families with a prescription for food puts a meal on their tables and alleviates a burden in their lives. This is a natural partnership and one that we're proud to promote."

Promise Healthcare medical staff is trained to screen for food insecurity in prenatal and pediatric patients as part of their medical visit. If a family needs assistance, staff provides a bag of nutritious food with information on health, nutrition and other food resources.

"Food insecurity in children can have both immediate and potentially life-long health effects," said Nancy Greenwalt, Executive Director of Promise Healthcare. "With over 70% of our patients living in poverty, it was important to have emergency food available for our families."

Promise Healthcare's Food as Medicine program is for patients of the health center as part of a routine medical visit. Promise Healthcare is currently accepting new patients at all locations. For more information on becoming a patient and receiving food through this program, visit www.promisehealth.org or call 217-356-1558.

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About Eastern Illinois Foodbank

Eastern Illinois Foodbank works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois through cooperation with a network of food pantries, agencies and other programs. The Foodbank distributes donated and discounted food throughout a 17-county service area in cooperation with over 200 member agencies and programs. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 116,000 men, women and children each year. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County.

About Promise Healthcare

Promise Healthcare is dedicated to improving the health of the community through treatment, prevention, and education. Promise Healthcare provides 35,000 visits and cares for over 10,000 patients a year through Frances Nelson, the SmileHealthy dental programs, and satellites at Presence Covenant's Community Resource Center, a clinic on Walnut at Rosecrance, and mobile clinics. Promise provides primary medical, behavioral health and dental care to those who might otherwise go without.