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ASAP Connects with Statewide and National Food Is Medicine Movement

Data shows Farm Fresh Produce Prescription programs deliver economic and health benefits

ASHEVILLE, NC (June 10, 2026)—Produce prescription programs that provide locally grown products paired with education and experiential services can support multiple benefits according to a [recent report](#) from ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) evaluating the impact of the Farm Fresh Produce Prescription from 2022–2024. In announcing grants to ASAP and other organizations, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation (Blue Cross NC Foundation) [also released data](#) showing how Food Is Medicine programs deliver meaningful savings and improve health.

ASAP is one of nine organizations that received a grant from Blue Cross NC Foundation to expand local efforts that improve access to healthy food, helping people better manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension and reducing health care costs overall. Supporting programs offering services from medically tailored meals to produce prescriptions, the funding is part of the Blue Cross NC Foundation’s \$4 million statewide investment supporting organizations across North Carolina that are integrating food into healthcare.

“Access to healthy food is foundational to good health,” said Colleen Briggs, President of the Blue Cross NC Foundation and Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Blue Cross NC. “By investing in community-led Food Is Medicine programs like ASAP’s Farm Fresh Produce Prescription, we’re supporting proven strategies that help people manage chronic conditions, strengthen local food systems, and lower health care costs.”

Through the Farm Fresh Produce Prescription, healthcare providers write a prescription for fresh produce for patients identified as food insecure and at risk of diet related disease. Unique to a handful of programs across the country, ASAP’s model supports participants buying produce directly from growers at local farmers markets. Food Is Medicine programs that utilize local, direct-market models like this one strengthen connections of healthcare systems with trusted, front-line community-based organizations and local food systems, helping to support positive behavior change and authentic collaborations with rural communities.

“It’s exciting to see the growing momentum for Food Is Medicine programs—particularly programs that connect with and strengthen local food economies,” said Molly Nicholie, ASAP’s Executive Director. “These intersections are at the heart of ASAP’s mission to build healthier communities *and* stronger farms.”

Last week, Nicholie and ASAP’s Local Food Research Center Director Heidi Blanck attended FIMCON in Washington, D.C., a new national conference uniting the Food Is Medicine ecosystem—healthcare professionals, FIM practitioners, program participants, researchers, policymakers, community leaders, and funders. The conference offered a groundbreaking opportunity to be part of a unified, large-scale convening at a critical moment for the movement.

ASAP’s report, “Economic and Health Benefits of Farm Fresh Produce Prescription,” is available at asapconnections.org/local-food-research-center. To learn more about statewide Food Is Medicine efforts, visit ncfoodismedicine.org.

[High-resolution photos are available [here](#). Contact obrewer@asapconnections.org for more.]

ABOUT ASAP (APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT)

ASAP’s mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To learn more, visit asapconnections.org.

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