



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **MOBILE FOOD PROGRAM AT VA MEDICAL CENTER IMPROVES VETERANS' ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD**

**Sikeston, MO (Nov. 10,2021)** – A partnership between the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff and Southeast Missouri Food Bank resulted in improved health for local veterans, according to surveys submitted by the majority of participants in the program.

Under the grant-funded program, Southeast Missouri Food Bank provides a box of 35-40 pounds of fresh produce, lean protein and other foods to about 75 participating veterans. The boxes are distributed through the VA Medical Center each month.

Eighty-eight percent of the 58 veterans who completed both a pre- and post-survey in the program reported improved health.

“These veterans have made incredible sacrifices to protect the freedoms we enjoy,” said Joey Keys, SEMO Food Bank chief executive officer. “We are so glad to have had the opportunity to provide them with nutritious food through this partnership with the VA Medical Center.”

Other survey results included:

- Veterans increased the number of days per week they ate fruits and vegetables.
- Veterans increased their fruit consumption by over one serving each week.
- Participants increased their vegetable intake by nearly one and a half servings a week.
- Veterans increased protein intake by more than one cup a week.

“We really appreciated having more fresh produce because we know that when a veteran experiences food insecurity, they’re more likely have diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure,” said Ashley Aubuchon, health promotion disease prevention program manager for the VA Medical Center. “The results of this survey show that access to healthy foods like these and education will go a long way in improving health outcomes for our veterans.”

The Veterans Healthy Food Surplus is part of the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program at the Pershing VA Medical Center. For information on future food distributions, veterans may contact Aubuchon at 573-778-4386.

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### **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build a healthy community. The food bank provides food to 143 food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in 16 southeast Missouri counties, including Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, and Wayne counties. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also provides mobile food distributions, monthly boxes of food to eligible seniors and weekend backpacks of food to about 1,200 students in 30 school districts. The Food Bank is affiliated with Feeding America, the nation's largest food bank network, and has received the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, attesting to its adherence to best practices. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or volunteering. Visit [SemoFoodBank.org](http://SemoFoodBank.org) for more information.