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**ALAMEDA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY, AND PARTNERS LAUNCH FOOD AS
MEDICINE PROGRAM AT LIFELONG MEDICAL CENTER**

The 'Food as Medicine' program aims to address food insecurity while improving the physical and behavioral health of Alameda County residents.

Alameda, CA— This week, Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance), ALL IN Alameda County (ALL IN), and other community partners launched a Food as Medicine program at LifeLong Ashby Health Center, a community clinic that serves neighborhoods in Berkeley and North Oakland. Earlier this year, the Alliance invested \$275,000 to support strategies at local clinics, including the newest site at LifeLong Ashby Health Center. The Food as Medicine program aims to address the social determinants of health among Alameda County residents by prescribing patients' nutrient-dense produce and connecting them to local support groups through weekly visits provided by Open Source Wellness.

"Today, more than 130 million Americans are affected by chronic diseases that are often preventable, treatable, and reversible. COVID has highlighted the connection between chronic diseases and other crises we were facing prior to the pandemic—food insecurity, social isolation, and racism. COVID is requiring us to work differently across silos to advance health equity," said Dr. Steven Chen, Chief Medical Officer of ALL IN."

This innovative model provides patients food prescriptions, which includes sixteen weeks of vegetables that are delivered to patients' doorsteps during the ongoing Shelter-in-Place. The prescriptions are filled by Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm that creates green economy jobs for people on probation. As part of the program, participants will also have access to group medical visits that bring patients together virtually and include physical activity, healthy food demonstrations, stress reduction and social connection over the course of four months.

"With the added stress and economic insecurity caused by the COVID pandemic - particularly for communities of color - the ALL IN Alameda County Food as Medicine initiative located at the Lifelong Ashby Health Center has arrived at a critical moment," reflected Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson. "This program not only acknowledges how food and nutrition impact our overall health - but it also uses strategies like the Food Farmacy and the Open Source Wellness program to reduce rates of anxiety, depression, and stress. With this innovative and holistic approach, it is my hope that we continue to break down barriers to food access and that more people in Alameda County will achieve greater health and well-being."

Limited access to nutritious food has been linked to serious health complications, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and other chronic diseases. In Alameda County, it is estimated that nearly 10 percent of residents are facing food insecurity, particularly those from low-income communities of color, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified the issue. The lack of nutritious food options for people of color can be linked to their higher rates of obesity and diabetes - conditions that lead to poor health outcomes and hospitalizations. Through the Food as Medicine program, primary care providers and staff will screen patients for food insecurity and offer healthy food interventions in combination with group behavioral support to improve health, emotional wellbeing, and food security for Alameda County residents.

“This innovative program has become one of Alameda County’s primary strategies for addressing health disparities, which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, in our most vulnerable families and communities,” said Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan. “As we expand Food as Medicine countywide, I am grateful for the invaluable partnership with the Alameda Alliance for Health and our other partners that clearly demonstrates our collective commitment to addressing the root causes of health disparities.”

The Alliance’s investment will help expand the Food as Medicine program at LifeLong Ashby Health Center in addition to supporting strategies that further expand future Food as Medicine efforts. Currently, the Food as Medicine initiative has sites at Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center, Native American Health Center, and Hayward Wellness Center and smaller Food Farmacies operate at La Clinica de La Raza, Roots Community Health Center and West Oakland Health Center, with efforts to expand at existing and future sites throughout Alameda County.

“The impacts of food insecurity and social isolation in our community are creating high rates of health disparities including depression, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension” said Alliance Chief Executive Officer Scott Coffin. “The Food as Medicine program is urgently needed as we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the disproportionate impact it is having on our Medi-Cal members and communities of color.”

To learn more about Food as Medicine efforts, visit <http://www.acgov.org/allin/> or to learn more about the Alliance, visit us at <http://alamedaalliance.org/>.

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About Alameda Alliance for Health

Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) is a local, public, not-for-profit managed care health plan committed to making high quality health care services accessible and affordable to Alameda County residents. Established in 1996, the Alliance was created by and for Alameda County residents. The Alliance Board of Governors, leadership staff, and provider network reflect the county’s cultural and linguistic diversity. The Alliance provides health care coverage to over 275,000 low-income children and adults through National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accredited Medi-Cal and Alliance Group Care programs.

About ALL IN Alameda County

In January 2014, on the 50th Anniversary of President Johnson's War on Poverty, Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan launched the New War on Poverty in Alameda County. The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution in support of the effort, which was named ALL IN Alameda County. ALL IN Alameda County was created to make significant progress towards the ambitious goal of ending poverty in our community. ALL IN's primary strategies are collaboration and innovation. Through a stakeholder engagement process involving County staff and leadership and community leadership, everyone with a role in creating conditions for families and individual residents in Alameda County to prosper are encouraged to work together to design and implement new solutions.