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Nourishing Beginnings Program Aims to Improve Health, Equity of Birth Outcomes through Nutrition and Social Support

*Area organizations launch research program designed to help*

 *pregnant people meet nutrition needs*

Better Health Partnership, Case Western Reserve University, First Year Cleveland and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank are partnering to provide a single point of service delivery to food insecure pregnant individuals through Community Health Workers.

This program will evaluate two models of food support, with the goal of creating and evaluating a sustainable and effective program that improves health outcomes. To determine the most effective and impactful way to deliver nutrition, participants will be assigned into one of two program study groups.

One group will receive boxed food from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank every other week to make nutritious meals at home. These foods are unprocessed, highly nutritious, and customized to fit the pregnant person’s needs.

The second group will receive cash that can be used for groceries every other week. Participants will also receive navigation to health food retail and access to nutrition resources as well as training and support from community health workers.

All participants will receive assistance with needed kitchen items as well as access to easy-to-understand recipes and nutrition information for during and after pregnancy.

This research study made possible with generous funding from the Bruening Foundation, Vitamix Foundation, and the CWRU Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative will follow 124 pregnant people through 6 months post-partum over the next two years. Participants will be asked a number of questions about health, stress, lifestyle, and food insecurity amongst other questions throughout the process. A summary of findings and recommendations will be developed at the end of the program.

***About Better Health Partnership***

Better Health Partnership (BHP), established in 2007, is a non-profit regional health improvement collaborative dedicated to the mission of bringing health care, social services, and other sectors together to share best practices and accelerate data-informed improvements in equitable population and community health. BHP operates the Pathways Community HUB that leverages Community Health Workers to serve at-risk individuals living in Cuyahoga County. We envision being Northeast Ohio's most trusted health improvement collaborative that achieves exceptional health value and eradicates health disparities in Northeast Ohio.

***About CWRU’s Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative***

The Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) of Cleveland, a collaborative among Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) and its affiliated hospital systems, the Cleveland Clinic (CC), MetroHealth (MH), University Hospitals (UH), and the Louis Stokes Veterans Administration Medical Center (VA) aspires to be a catalyst for high quality clinical and translational (C/T) research both locally and nationally by changing the culture and environment of biomedical research, sharing resources and expertise, and streamlining the research process to move translational research from bench to bedside and to the community.

***About First Year Cleveland***

First Year Cleveland was established in December 2015 by community leaders who were alarmed by the number of babies dying in Cuyahoga County. In a city with outstanding health care and supportive services, these leaders believed there was a way to develop an effective, comprehensive and sustainable approach to solving infant mortality.

**About the Greater Cleveland Food Bank**

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank is the largest hunger relief organization in Northeast Ohio having provided 52 million meals in FY2021 to more than 343,000 hungry people in Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Ashland and Richland counties. Our mission is working together to ensure that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day. We do this through both food distribution and SNAP outreach efforts. The Food Bank continues to provide nutritious food to those in need while working to end hunger tomorrow through connecting clients to resources. For more information go to [www.GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org](http://www.GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org).

***About the Bruening Foundation***

The Bruening Foundation focuses on addressing the roots of poverty and alleviating its impact on families and children in Cuyahoga County. Through the foundation’s responsive grantmaking to support safety-net services and learning and its proactive investments in early childhood development, the Foundation aims to lift families out of poverty and advance economic prosperity. For more information, visit: <https://brueningfoundation.org/>.

**About Vitamix Foundation**

The Vitamix Foundation is a nonprofit, grant-making organization established by Vitamix to help shape a nation where diet-driven illness does not exist. Its mission is to collaborate and partner with others to further the knowledge, consumption, and enjoyment of plant-based whole foods. Grant-making is by invitation only and is focused on three key areas: prenatal – preconception, pregnancy and lactation, first 2,000 days – birth to kindergarten, and research. For more information about the Vitamix Foundation, please visit [www.vitamixfoundation.org](http://www.vitamixfoundation.org).

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