



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local group aims to bring healthier foods to neighborhoods near you

Healthy Retail Initiative in the Chippewa Valley

Eau Claire, WI –September 26, 2018—How often do you stop at a gas station, convenience, or corner store for a few groceries? Do you ever walk out with soda, chips, or candy that you didn’t plan on buying? Typical convenience store and gas station food environments can make choosing healthy food very hard and choosing unhealthy food very easy. These nine stores in the Chippewa Valley are working with members of the *Healthy Food Marketing Collaborative* to reverse this trend and help residents make a healthy food choice, the easy choice:

Chippewa County Location

Bridge Stop, 330 W Main St, New Auburn

Dunn County Locations

Bridge Stop, 101 State Road 25, Wheeler

Cenex Convenience Store, 318 Railroad Ave, Boyceville

Bob & Steve’s BP Amoco Shop, 1501 9th St, Menomonie

Bob & Steve’s BP Gas Station, 506 Hwy 12 W, Knapp

Ray’s Market, 102 Tonnar South St, Ridgeland

Eau Claire County Locations

Direct Stores, 317 N. Barstow St, Eau Claire

Korner Store, 309 E Lincoln Ave, Fall Creek

Great Lakes Fresh Market, 155 W Lincoln Ave, Augusta

Most participating stores are located in areas of low access to healthy and affordable food. Limited food and transportation options make it harder for many residents living in low-income or rural areas of the Chippewa Valley to eat a healthy diet. Furthermore, new evidence compiled by the Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Initiative shows that, on average, rural communities have higher rates of obesity than urban areas. ***In Eau Claire County, obesity rates in rural zip codes were found to be up to 10% higher than obesity rates in zip codes located within the city of Eau Claire.*** Often residents turn to gas stations, convenience or corner stores to meet their food needs. The goal of this project was to increase access to healthy food in targeted neighborhoods.

As part of the project, stores completed healthy retail assessments. Based on the assessment, they chose strategies to increase the availability and sales of fruits and vegetables in their stores. Items such as eye-catching displays, coolers, and messaging signs were purchased and placed to help these local stores offer more fruits and vegetables. “For many small stores, it is difficult to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in amounts they can sell from food distributors. Connections and partnerships built through this work will continue in the Chippewa Valley” says Susan Krahn, Public Health Nutritionist with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.



This work was funded by the Department of Health Services Chronic Disease Prevention Unit Coalition Healthy Retail grant. To learn more about our work with local convenience and grocery stores, contact Susan Krahn at 715-839-6941.

*Members from Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn County coalitions have joined together to form the **Healthy Food Marketing Collaborative**. Partners include: Chippewa County Health Department, Eau Claire City-County Health Department, HSHS St. Joseph's/Sacred Heart Hospitals, Mayo Clinic Health System, and UW-Extension FoodWise Program: Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire counties.*

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