

Food Insecurity and Potential Solutions in York Region

Presented to HSPB-YR

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Outline

- CHS Food Systems Ad Hoc Working Group
- "Food security" compared to "food insecurity"
- Food insecurity in York Region
 Prevalence, health effects, Nutritious Food Basket
- Findings from Food Systems WG
 - Food responses and income responses
 - Data collection
- Alignment with HSPB
- Next steps?



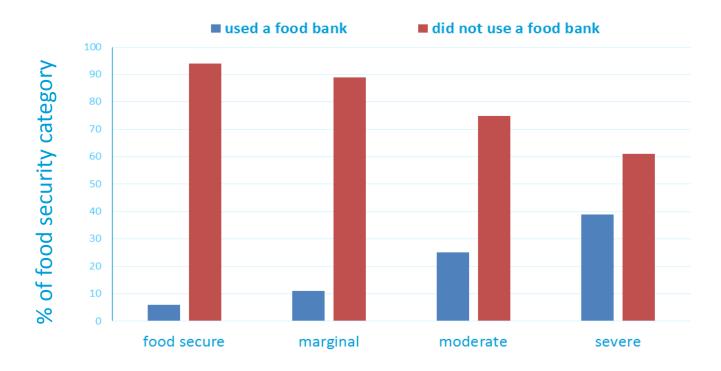
Background to Food Systems WG

- Discussion at CHS Department Leadership Team (DLT) about food drives and food insecurity in York Region
- CHS Food Systems Ad Hoc Working Group began meeting in the fall of 2014
- Conducted a literature review
- Conducted surveys and focus groups with CHS staff, external agency staff, and clients





Proportion of families who used a food bank in the past 12 months, by household food security status



From: PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research: http://proof.utoronto.ca/food-bank-stats-dont-tell-the-story-of-food-insecurity

Community and Health Services

Public Health





Household Food Insecurity

Inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints.

Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., Dachner, N., Household food insecurity in Canada 2012, 2014. Available from:

http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/





Food security

Exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

World Food Summit, 1996





Food Insecurity in York Region

- 7% +/- 1% of York Region households experienced food insecurity between 2009 and 2014
- Applied to 2016 household numbers -> 24,700 food insecure <u>households</u> in the Region





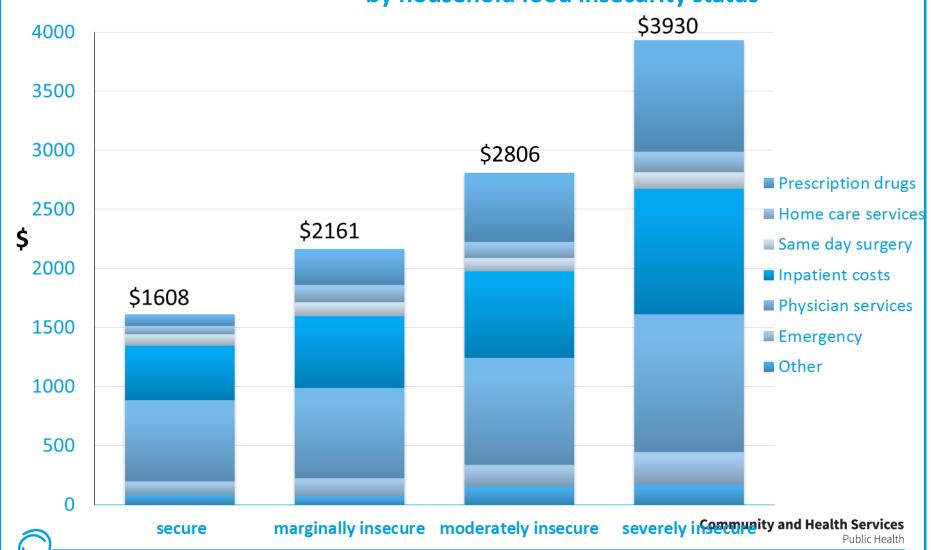
Health effects of food insecurity

- Poorer self-rated health and greater stress
- More likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as hypertension and mood and anxiety disorders
- Higher rates of diabetes, heart disease and depression
- More difficult to manage existing chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and HIV
- Children at greater risk of asthma and depression



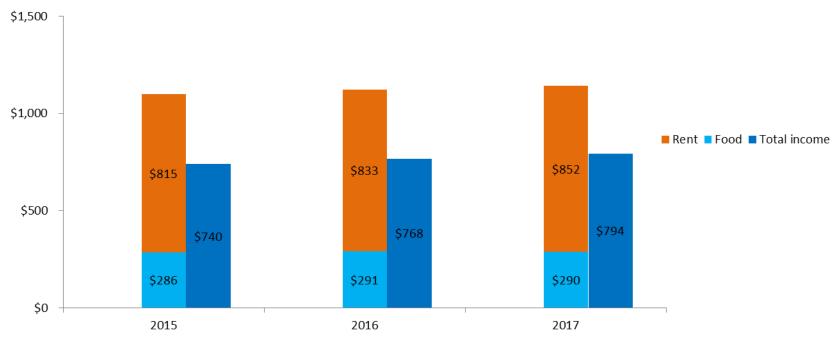


Annual average health care costs per person for Ontario adults (18-64 years of age), by household food insecurity status





Single person on Ontario Works



Rent costs from Rental Market Report: Ontario Highlights. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Fall 2016.

Income from Social Assistance, Pension and Tax Credit Rates April to June 2017, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Food costs from York Region Public Health

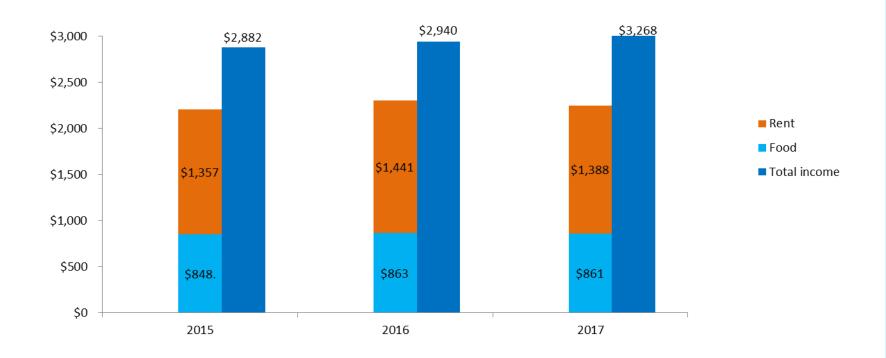
Community and Health Services

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Family of 4 1 full-time minimum wage earner



Rent costs from Rental Market Report: Ontario Highlights. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Fall 2016. Income from Government of Ontario https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act/minimum-wage

Food costs from York Region Public Health

Community and Health Services



Food responses to food insecurity

- Examples are school meal programs, community gardens, community kitchens, food skills workshops, food banks, meal programs
- Can have educational, health and social benefits for users
- Have not been shown to reduce food insecurity





"There is no indication that food insecurity is rooted in a lack of food skills or that gardening for food protects households from food insecurity."



Food Procurement, Food Skills & Food Insecurity

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem that affects over 4 million Canadians, it negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), in 2012 and 2013, questions were included on the CCHS to assess the food skills and practices of adults with sample of 10,000 Canadians for each year. This factsheet summarizes the findings from a recent study using that data.

Food Purchasing



The vast majority (84%) of adults in food Insecure households report shopping with a budget on how much they can spend on food, but only 43% of adults in food secure households say they do this.

The two groups do not differ when it comes to other shopping behaviours, like planning meals before shopping using a written grocery list, or using Canada's Food Guide.



Food Preparation Skills

Adults in food insecure households do not report having lower food preparation skills than those in food secure households.

In fact, most Canadian adults, regardless of food insecurity status, considered themselves highly skilled at various aspects of food preparation.

Cooking Ability

The cooking abilities of adults in food insecure households are similar to those in food secure households. In fact, very few Canadian adults, regardless of food insecurity status, report not knowing where to start when it comes to cooking.

Self-rated cooking ability by household food insecurity status Food Secure Food Insecure





- Don't know where to start when it comes to cook ■ Can do things such as boil an egg or cook a grilled cheese sand
 ■ Can prepare simple meals but nothing too complicated
- Can cook more dishes if I have a recipi

Recipe Adjustment

Almost two thirds of Canadian adults report adjusting recipes reducing fat, salt, or sugar, and those in food insecure households are not any less likely to do so.





Although Canadian adults in food Insecure households are less likely to garden for food than those in food secure households. there is no indication that gardening for food protects seholds from food Insecurity.

Reducing Food Insecurity

Canadian adults in food insecure households do not have poorer food skills than those in food secure households There is no indication that food insecurity is rooted in a lack of food skills or that gardening for food protects households from food insecurity.

While interventions designed to increase food skills and promote gardening for food are important in reaching other public health goals like increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, the findings here suggest that such interventions are unlikely to impact food insecurity rates in Canada.



Huislan, A., Orr, S. K., & Tarasuk, V. (2017). Adults: food skills and use of gardens are not associated with household food insecurity in Canada. Canadian Journal of Public Health, 107(8), 6526-6522



Public Health





Income responses to food insecurity

- Researchers and community organizations advocate for
 - Living wages
 - Decreases in precarious employment
 - Increases to social assistance rates
 - Increases in affordable housing
 - A Basic Income Guarantee or guaranteed annual income





Food Systems WG research Top ranked approaches to address food insecurity

Rank	CHS teams	Community agencies	Food Systems Work Group
1	Advocacy for income	Public and political awareness of	Advocacy for poverty issues
		food insecurity	
2	Food literacy workshops	Subsidized housing (tied)	Increase employment (tied)
3	Advocacy for food	Secure employment, living wage,	Increase income (tied)
	programs	etc. (tied)	
4	Housing stability	Address root causes	Secure employment, living wage,
	programs		etc. (tied)
5	Employment assistance	Advocacy for poverty issues	Address root causes
	programs		





Summary of Food Systems WG literature, surveys and focus groups

- Charitable approaches and food programs not effective at reducing food insecurity
- Inadequate income is the underlying cause of food insecurity
- Need to address income adequacy





Alignment to HSPB Community Results

- Housing options that are affordable for everyone in our community
- Progressive employment opportunities in a changing economy





How can HSPB play a role in addressing food insecurity in York Region?