

# Food as Medicine Programs are growing in Montgomery County

The Community Based Care Management (CBCM) program in Montgomery County, led by the County's Office of Managed Care Solutions (OMCS), is an initiative focused on reducing health disparities and addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) for HealthChoices members across the County. In the Fall of 2021, a Food as Medicine (FAM) pilot was created by the CBCM program, together with key partners to include [Creative Health Services](#), [Pennsylvania Horticultural Society \(PHS\)](#), and Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania (Magellan). Three years later, Creative Health Services continues to expand their FAM pilot efforts, and in January 2024, [Central Behavioral Health](#) became the 2<sup>nd</sup> provider in Montgomery County to sign up for a FAM pilot of its own.

Each provider is focused on delivering a FAM model offering nutritional education and innovative resources to reduce health disparities through healthy eating and local gardening at the PHS Green Resource Center in Norristown's Farm Park. In 2024, the Magellan Cares Foundation provided a \$2,500 donation to PHS in support of this important ongoing community effort. The OMCS facilitates monthly check-in meetings for updates, troubleshooting, and continual improvement for each pilot program.

Key benefits of a CBCM FAM pilot include:

- Local produce
- On-site garden experiences
- Kitchen supplies
- Regular workshops consisting of nutrition education and hands on learning
- Individualized nutrition support
- Improvements in self-perception of health and overall wellness
- Physical health improvements (i.e. blood pressure, weight, etc...)

Key expectations for participants:

- General eligibility guidelines
- Nutritional screening requirements
- Monthly scheduling for workshops and group programming
- Periodic health monitoring

For these two FAM pilots in Montgomery County, an important feature offered by PHS includes ongoing education for FAM pilot participants and its partners.