

UW Health: Donates van and food to Wisconsin Food Recovery Network

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MADISON, WI - In a continued effort to combat hunger in the area, UW Health has donated a refrigerated van for food transportation and to donate surplus-fresh food to the Badger Prairie Needs Network food pantry in Verona.

The Badger Prairie Complex in Verona is expanding with a second commercial kitchen, allowing more opportunity to package new sources of fresh food. The Dane County-owned facility is located at 1200 E. Verona Avenue.

The UW Health van was donated to the Community Action Coalition (CAC) whose staff will pick up fresh food from University Hospital and other community locations. The CAC did not have a refrigerated van before the UW Health donation.

This new project is a part of The Wisconsin Food Recovery Network, a new initiative to leverage established relationships between food distribution systems and local food pantries. The network includes: Badger Prairie Needs Network, Community Action Coalition, UW Hospital and Clinics and Second Harvest of Southern Wisconsin. The slogan for the group is "Kitchen to Table: Wisconsin Food Recovery Network."

"We are excited to be a part of this partnership," said Megan Waltz, UW Hospital's

director of culinary services. “At UW Hospital we offer fresh food and nutritious options. We follow strict safety standards. When we say ‘leftover food,’ we mean a whole pan of lasagna or fresh chicken. We hope this model continues to grow and large organizations with commercial kitchens across the country will consider donating their fresh left-over food.”

One in nine adults and one in six children in Dane County have food insecurity, according to the national hunger-relief organization Feeding America. The van donation will allow more options to pick up food and the expansion in the Verona location allows a place for the extra food to be packaged and served to the community.

In addition to the social benefits, this new partnership will help divert food from landfills.