

UW Health: Expands hours, adds location for free summer meal program

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MADISON, Wis. – UW Health will expand hours and add Union Corners Clinic for year two of their Summer Food Service Program that provides free summer meals to children 18 and under.

UW Health is only Madison area healthcare organization offering free summer meals.

In the first year last summer, UW Health served more than 2,000 free meals – an average of 27 meals each day — over 75 days at UW Hospital and American Family Children’s Hospital. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The new, extended hours at the original locations include free meals from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week at the UW Hospital cafeteria. American Family Children’s Hospital Farmer’s Market Café on the first floor will be open 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Also new this year on Fridays is a food truck to be set up from 12-2 p.m. at the Union Corners Clinic parking lot, 2402 Winnebago Street, offering free boxed meals. There is no income requirement or registration; the truck is open to anyone in the

community. Meals are provided to eligible children regardless of race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability. The program starts June 11 and runs through August 31. The first Friday at Union Corners Clinic will be June 15.

“This program fills a void created when school lunches are not available. For some kids, no school can mean no lunch. Helping parents meet the nutritional needs of their child is the strength of this program,” said Cassie Vanderwall, UW Health clinical nutritionist and dietetic internship program manager. “We are excited for year two and to build off last year. We think expanding the hours and adding Union Corners will increase awareness and help serve a need in our community.”

One in six children in Dane County has food insecurity, according to the national hunger-relief organization Feeding America.

The United States Department of Agriculture defines food security as having access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. Families may be considered food-insecure if they have anxiety about having enough food in the house, have to buy food of low quality or have to eat less or less often.

The meals, made fresh daily, meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program standards and will include a whole grain, dairy, lean protein, fruit and vegetable.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, provides nutritious meals to children during the summer, when free and reduced-price school meals are typically unavailable. Free meals will be made available to children 18 years of age and under.

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