OCTOBER 29, 2026



THE MINNESOTA FOOD IS MEDICINE SUMMIT 2026

CO-PRESENTED BY

openarms Fairview

Table of Contents

Welcome | 3
Agenda & Sessions | 4
Our Presenters | 7
Our Sponsors | 11

Wi-Fi Access

Central-Park-Public

Keep The Momentum Going! Fill Out Our Next Steps Survey.

2026

Welcome to the Inaugural Minnesota Food is Medicine Summit!

We are grateful to have you join us as we bring together leaders from healthcare, public health, community organizations, government, research, philanthropy, and the food system to explore how nutrition can improve health and strengthen communities across Minnesota.

Food is Medicine is gaining momentum nationwide, and Minnesota organizations are leading innovative efforts to connect people to the nutritious foods they need to support health and well-being. At the same time, important questions remain about evidence, implementation, partnerships, and sustainability. This summit was created to:

- *Elevate Food Is Medicine as a critical strategy for improving equitable health outcomes across Minnesota.*
- *Connect leaders, practitioners, policymakers, healthcare providers, researchers, and community organizations to strengthen relationships and expand networks across the field.*
- *Catalyze collaboration by laying the foundation for new partnerships, cross-sector coalitions, and collective action that advances Food Is Medicine statewide.*

Throughout the day, you will hear from practitioners, researchers, healthcare leaders, policymakers, community organizations, and national experts who are helping shape the future of Food is Medicine. We hope these conversations strengthen relationships, spark new ideas, and inspire collaboration across sectors.

Most importantly, we hope today serves as a reminder that no single organization can advance this work alone. Thank you for being part of this inaugural gathering. We are honored to learn alongside you and look forward to what we can accomplish together for the health and well-being of all Minnesotans.

With gratitude,



Leah Hebert Welles

Chief Executive Officer
Open Arms of Minnesota



Diane Tran

Executive Director, Center for Community Health Equity,
Fairview

The 2026 Minnesota Food is Medicine Summit defines Food is Medicine as:
The range of programs that integrate nutrition and nutrition education into healthcare to prevent or manage diet-related health conditions. These interventions include medically tailored meals, medically tailored groceries, and produce prescriptions.

AGENDA & SESSIONS

8:00 Check In & Networking

8:30 Welcome: The Growth of Food is Medicine

An introduction to the Food is Medicine movement, including key terminology, intervention types, and the growing role of nutrition in healthcare. This opening session will establish a shared foundation for the day and highlight opportunities for collaboration across sectors.

> ***Presenter:*** *Leah Hebert Welles, Open Arms of Minnesota*

8:45 Fair Table: Building a Cross-Sector Food is Medicine Program

A case study of the Fair Table initiative, exploring how organizations have collaborated to bring nutrition to Fairview's patients. Attendees will gain practical insights into the opportunities and challenges of cross-sector implementation.

> ***Moderator:*** *Terese Hill, Fairview*
> ***Panel:*** *Dr. James Letts, Fairview | Emilie Cagnazzo, Open Arms of Minnesota | Anna Richardson, The Good Acre | Stephanie Wagner, The Food Group*

10:00 What the Evidence Says: Outcomes, Cost, & Research Priorities

A review of current research on medically tailored meals, medically tailored groceries, and produce prescriptions. This presentation will highlight what we know about Food is Medicine outcomes and identify opportunities for future research. and produce prescriptions.

> ***Presenters:*** *Kelly Naranjo, God's Love We Deliver | Liana Schreiber, Minnesota Department of Health*

11:00 The Investment Test: Is a Food is Medicine Program Ready for Investment?

How do organizations decide to invest in Food is Medicine? Leaders from multiple sectors will discuss how they evaluate impact, assess readiness, and determine where resources can create meaningful and lasting benefits.

> ***Moderator:*** *Ted Carling, Ecotone Analytics*
> ***Panel:*** *Ben Waltz, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Minnesota| Jennifer Compton, Allina Health| Jesus Barrera, American Cancer Society*

11:40 Lunch

12:30 Breakout Session 1

Medically Tailored Meals | Woodlands A

An exploration of when medically tailored meals are the most appropriate intervention and how programs are designed to support individuals with complex health needs. Attendees will gain practical insights into implementation and participant outcomes.

> ***Presenter:*** *Leah Hebert Welles, Open Arms of Minnesota*

Food is Medicine by and for Rural Minnesota | Woodlands B/C

A conversation highlighting how rural communities are developing Food is Medicine approaches that reflect local needs, assets, partnerships, and realities. Speakers will share lessons learned from serving communities across Greater Minnesota.

> ***Moderator:*** *Hilary Gebauer, Minnesota Department of Health*
> ***Panel:*** *Natalie Knutson, Lake Region Healthcare | Lauren Pipken, Fairview Range | Kate Cowie-Haskell, Northwoods Food Project | Allison Rian, Renewing the Countryside*

Prevention Starts Before the Prescription | Amphitheater

Food is Medicine exists within a broader ecosystem of prevention, nutrition, and community health. This session explores how organizations are improving health through food access, education, local food systems, and other upstream approaches.

> ***Moderator:*** *Diana Cutts, HCMC and Children's Healthwatch*
> ***Panel:*** *Jenny Breen, Bakken Center | Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, Regenerative Agriculture Alliance | Anna Reid, University of Minnesota Extension | Princess Titus, Appetite For Change*

1:20 Breakout Session 2

Medically Tailored Groceries | Woodlands A

An overview of medically tailored grocery programs and the unique role they play within the Food is Medicine continuum. Learn how organizations are balancing nutrition support, participant choice, accessibility, and health outcomes.

> ***Presenter:*** *Kali Hazlett, Second Harvest Heartland | Kaitlin Overman, North Memorial*

Innovative Food is Medicine Partnerships | Woodlands B/C

Creative partnerships can expand the reach and impact of Food is Medicine. This session showcases collaborative initiatives that combine the strengths of multiple organizations to address community needs in new ways.

> ***Moderator:*** *Aimee Pappenfus, Allina Health*
> ***Panel:*** *Theresa Schneider, The Good Acre | Christine Melko, Hennepin County Medical Center | Ranelle Kirchner, Southside Community Health Services*

Designing Food is Medicine Programs for Specific Populations | Amphitheater

Communities have unique needs, strengths, and priorities. This session highlights how organizations are designing Food is Medicine programs around the populations they serve, creating approaches that are relevant, effective, and participant-centered.

> ***Moderator:*** *Diane Tran, Fairview*
> ***Panel:*** *Casey Steciw-Tutic, Scott County Public Health | Andrew Mendez, Open Arms of Minnesota | Janssen Hang, Hmong American Farmers Association*

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2:10 Breakout Session 3

Quality, Trust, & Accountability Across Food is Medicine | Woodlands A

As Food is Medicine grows, ensuring quality and consistency becomes increasingly important. Learn how standards and accreditation can support trust, accountability, and long-term success across the field.

> ***Presenter:*** *Nalini Peres-da-Silva, Food is Medicine Coalition*

Produce Prescriptions | Woodlands B/C

Produce prescription programs can take many forms. This panel explores how organizations are designing programs that improve healthy food access, support participant engagement, and create meaningful outcomes for communities.

> ***Moderator:*** *Abby Gold, University of Minnesota*
> ***Panel:*** *Reba Batalden, Brightside Produce | Sophia Lenarz-Coy, The Food Group*

From Partnership to Sustainable Agreement | Amphitheater

Strong Food is Medicine programs depend on strong partnerships. This panel will explore what it takes to build and sustain successful collaborations across healthcare, community organizations, public agencies, and other partners.

> ***Moderator:*** *Ted Carling, Ecotone Analytics*
> ***Panel:*** *Andrew Marshall, Medica | Marna Canterbury, HealthPartners | Robin Manthie , Second Harvest Heartland*

3:05 Policy & Payment Pathways for a Healthier Minnesota

What policy and financing opportunities could advance Food is Medicine in Minnesota? Experts will discuss the pathways, challenges, and opportunities shaping the future of sustainable access.

> ***Presenter:*** *Katie Garfield, Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School*

4:00 Minnesota Food is Medicine Action Lab

An interactive session designed to capture ideas from across the room. Attendees will identify priorities, opportunities, and collaborative actions that can help shape the future of Food is Medicine in Minnesota.

> ***Presenter:*** *Melissa Laska, University of Minnesota*

4:20 Closing Remarks

A look back at the day's key themes and a look ahead to opportunities for continued collaboration. This closing session will highlight what was learned and where Minnesota's Food is Medicine community may go next.

> ***Presenter:*** *Diane Tran, Fairview*

4:30 Gift Pick-Up & Networking

Don't forget to pick up your gift bag before you leave.

PRESENTERS

Scan the QR code to read more about each of our presenters.



Leah Hebert Welles

CEO | Open Arms of Minnesota



Diane Tran

Executive Director | Center for Community Health Equity, Fairview



Terese Hill

Manager of Food is Medicine Strategy | Fairview



Dr. James Letts

Family Medicine Physician | Fairview



Emilie Cagnazzo

Strategic Partnerships Manager | Open Arms of Minnesota



Anna Richardson

Director of Market Access Programs | The Good Acre



Stephanie Wagner

Associate Programs Director | The Food Group



Kelly Naranjo

Director or Research & Evaluation | God's Love We Deliver



Liana Schreiber, MPH RDN

Sage Cancer Program Evaluator | Minnesota Department of Health



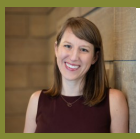
Ted Carling

Co-Founder | Ecotone Analytics



Ben Waltz

Product Owner – Social Drivers of Health | Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Minnesota



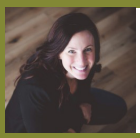
Jennifer Compton

Community Benefit and Evaluation Specialist | Allina Health



Jesus Barrera

Associate Director Community Partnerships | American Cancer Society



Natalie Knutson

Director of Wellness | Lake Region Healthcare



Lauren Pipken

Community Partnerships Coordinator | Fairview Range



Kate Cowie-Haskell

Executive Director | Northwoods Food Project



Allison Rian

Aitkin Farmer's Market Hub Manager | Renewing the Countryside



Diana Cutts

Child Health Researcher and Pediatrician | Children's Healthwatch and Hennepin County Medical Center



Jenny Breen

Chef, Public Health Nutrition Educator, Food Justice Consultant | Bakken Center for Spirituality and Healing and Transforming the Table



Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin

Director of Strategy and Innovation | Regenerative Agriculture Alliance



Anna Reid

SuperShelf Lead Consultant | University of Minnesota Extension



Princess Titus

Senior Engagement Officer and Co-Founder |Appetite for Change



Aimee Pappenfus

Director of System Community Engagement and Impact | Allina Health



Theresa Schneider

CEO | The Good Acre



Christine Melko

Population Health Advisor | Hennepin County Medical Center



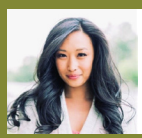
Ranelle Kirchner

Chronic Condition Program Manager & DSME Coordinator | Southside Community Health Services



Kali Hazlett

FoodRx Program Manager | Second Harvest Heartland



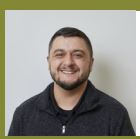
Kaitlin Overman

Population Health Care Navigator | North Memorial



Casey Steciw-Tutic

Food Access Community Planner | Scott County Public Health



Andrew Mendez

Chief Program Officer | Open Arms of Minnesota



Janssen Hang

Executive Director | Hmong American Farmers Association



Nalini Peres-da-Silva

Membership and Operations Associate | Food is Medicine Coalition



Hilary Gebauer

Nutrition Policy Coordinator | Minnesota Department of Health



Andrew Marshall

Regional Market President | Medica



Marna Canterbury

VP of Community Health and Partnerships | HealthPartners



Robin Manthie

VP Neighbor Impact and Strategic Growth | Second Harvest Heartland



Abby Gold

Health and Nutrition Extension Specialist | University of Minnesota



Reba Batalden

Director of Development | Brightside Produce



Sophia Lenarz-Coy

Executive Director | The Food Group



Katie Garfield

Director of Whole Person Care, Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation | Harvard Law School



Melissa Laska, PhD, RD

University Professor, Division of Epidemiology & Community Health | University of Minnesota

SPONSORS

Presented By

40 Years of Nourishing Our Neighbors
openarms

Fairview

Featured Sponsors

Medica

BlueCross BlueShield Minnesota

Allina Health

HealthPartners

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

GEORGE FAMILY FOUNDATION

second harvest HEARTLAND

Supporting Sponsors

- NourishedRx
- Larry and Cindy Mohr
- The Good Acre
- Optage Meals
- University of Minnesota, School of Public Health

Community Partners

- TC Food Justice
- North Star Natural Medicine
- Center for Professional Growth and Innovation at Northwestern Health Sciences University
- MN Health Centers

BUILT BY COMMUNITY





POWERED BY HOPE

PARTNER WITH US



NOURISHING CRITICALLY ILL MINNESOTANS SINCE 1986.

Proud co-host of the inaugural Minnesota Food is Medicine Summit, Open Arms of Minnesota is a Food is Medicine Coalition-accredited Medically Tailored Meal provider. With 40 years of experience delivering medically tailored meals and registered dietitian support, our work improves health outcomes for Minnesotans living with serious and chronic illness.

40 YEARS openarms

FAIR TABLE
FOOD IS MEDICINE
BY FAIRVIEW

Fairview is honored to partner with Open Arms to host the inaugural Minnesota Food is Medicine Summit.

Through Fairview's Food is Medicine initiative, we provide nutritious food to patients experiencing food insecurity, improve access to healthy culturally significant foods, support overall health and wellbeing, and help more Minnesotans better manage chronic diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FAIR TABLE

Fairview

Allina Health

Helping shape the future of *Food Is Medicine* in Minnesota



Partner for Good℠

We believe in the power of partnering with communities to improve health and well-being through relationships built on trust.

healthpartners.com/community

HealthPartners®

MN

You and Blue.℠ Better together.

Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Minnesota and Blue Plus® are nonprofit independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Turning partnership into healthier communities.

Medica is working with Fairview and The Good Acre to strengthen connections between health care and access to nutritious food.



Medica HEALTH PLANS

Proud Featured Sponsor | Minnesota Food is Medicine Summit



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans.

FOODRx

is an evidence based, cost saving, medically tailored grocery and nutrition education program built for health plans and providers.



To learn more, email us at FOODRx@2harvest.org

second harvest HEARTLAND

optage®
MEALS
Home-delivered meals and support
651-746-8280
Optage.org/Meals
All faiths welcome. Equal housing opportunity.
© 2026 Presbyterian Homes and Services

NourishedRx®
Connecting the worlds of food, health, and care.





SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PLANNING COMMITTEE!

Open Arms of Minnesota
Fairview
University of Minnesota School of Public Health
Minnesota Department of Health

