Proper nutrition is central to the prevention and management of numerous diseases, particularly chronic diseases. However, healthy foods can be expensive and inaccessible, particularly for individuals of lower socioeconomic status. Poor diet, poverty, unemployment, ethnic minority status, rural residence, and food insecurity have been found to be strong predictors of poor health. Addressing food insecurity and developing economic opportunities are necessary to resolving health disparities in rural low-income communities. To sustainably address food insecurity and increase economic opportunities in rural areas, Good Bowls, LLC, a social entrepreneurship venture started by researchers at the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, are working to address food insecurity and nutrition in low-income areas.

**Methods**

To assess the early stage acceptability and potential impact of Good Bowls on food insecurity and nutrition among corner store customers, a cross-sectional study design was used. Two surveys were administered: 1) a corner store intercept survey designed to learn more about the perceived availability of healthy food options, the barriers that corner store customers experience with regards to maintaining healthy diets, the food shopping and consumption patterns of corner store customers, and the early acceptability of Good Bowls; and 2) a taste test survey designed to test the reception of Good Bowls flavors among corner store customers. Data collection occurred at four corner stores located in Warren County, a non-metropolitan area in North Carolina that has been identified as a food desert. At each corner store, investigators administered paper surveys and were available to read the surveys aloud to participants if requested. Participants were given $5 as a thank-you for their time in completing the intercept survey.

**Demographic Data**

- **50 surveys collected**
- **4 participants identified themselves as food insecure, double that of Warren County’s food insecurity prevalence of 21.2 percent**
- **Half of the surveyed corner store customers face barriers in accessing healthy foods**
- **Barriers to healthy eating included cost, availability of food, and convenience**
- **Corner stores are a significant source of food for their customers and are an appropriate point of intervention**
- **15 percent of respondents did not have a working microwave oven**
- **Good Bowls were well-received by corner store customers**
- **Respondents were willing to pay an average of $3.28 for a Good Bowl**

**Discussion**

- **Corner stores are a significant source of food for their customers, and good intervention for Good Bowls**
- **Good Bowls were well-received by corner store customers, and success of the product from a business and intervention standpoint can be expected.**

**References**