P47 (continued)

Results: Participants were on average 44.1 ± 13.6 years of age, had a household size of 4.2 ± 2.0 , were primarily female (90.0%), had an annual household income $<\$35,000$ (75.9%), completed $\leq$ some college (76.7%), and had food insecurity (70.0%). Food security raw score decreased significantly from baseline to LTFU (6.1 ± 4.8 vs 2.6 ± 3.9 , respectively; $P = 0.001$), indicating an improvement in FSS.

Conclusion: Findings suggest the meal kit program helped improve FSS over the long-term, but results should be interpreted with caution due to the lack of a control group. Participants may have learned food resource management strategies to make better use of food dollars. Future interventions should explore the mechanism behind this improvement.

Funding: UF/IFAS Office of Research.

P48 Preliminary Analysis from Statewide Stakeholder Interviews Around the Impact of Food Access During COVID-19

Fatima Tobar, BS, ftobar@uri.edu, University of Rhode Island, 80 Washington St, Room 300, Providence, RI, 02903; Kate Balestracci, PhD, RDN, University of Rhode Island; Alison Tovar, PhD, MPH, University of Rhode Island; Heidi Hetzler, MS, RDN, University of Rhode Island; Margaret Samson, RDN, MS, University of Rhode Island; Kim Gans, PhD, MPH, University of Connecticut; Margaret Read, MA, Share Our Strength; Sarah Amin, PhD, MPH, University of Rhode Island

Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 24 million adults reported that their households sometimes or often lacked sufficient food in the last 7 days, with Black and Latino adults approximately 3 times as likely as White adults to report food insecurity.

Objective: The objective of this study was to assess the impact COVID-19 on food access in Rhode Island (RI), document challenges encountered, and identify promising practices and policy solutions by conducting individual, 1-hour key stakeholder interviews from September–November 2020.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: Virtual qualitative interviews ($n = 25$) were conducted with 33 key stakeholders from 25 community organizations located throughout RI. This includes state/city agencies ($n = 9$), nonprofit organizations ($n = 5$), Health Equity Zone representatives ($n = 5$), food pantries/food bank ($n = 4$), a home-delivered meal program ($n = 1$), and a FQHC ($n = 1$) that primarily serve low-income and racial/ethnic minority populations.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: A structured interview guide was developed to capture scope of work, successes and challenges, and impact on health disparities including how organizations adjusted during COVID-19 to provide access to food safely. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded in NVivo with a priori codes to guide the analysis. An inductive and deductive approach was used to identify themes.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that organizations struggled to meet food needs due to unemployment, lack of culturally relevant foods, insufficient resources (ie, funding, personal protective equipment, technology), and exacerbation of existing food access challenges connected to transportation and food storage needs. Despite these challenges, reported successes included enhanced collaboration between new and existing partnerships among stakeholders, increased effective communication among community stakeholders and the populations they serve, and increases in new initiatives to support food access needs.

Conclusion: Our findings highlight the need to ensure a coordinated response through strategic leadership that has a focus on vulnerable racial/ethnic populations to ensure access to culturally appropriate food during emergency situations.

Funding: None.

P49 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists' Perceptions of Helping Mothers Gain Sustainable Access to Healthy Foods

Latasha Williams, MS, RDN, ldwilli4@ncsu.edu, North Carolina State University, 400 Dan Allen Dr, Raleigh, NC, 27695; Emily H. Griffith, PhD, North Carolina State University; L. Suzanne Goodell, PhD, RDN, North Carolina State University

Background: Food insecurity in households with children headed by single mothers is higher than the national average. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) can play a vital role in helping mothers gain sustainable access to healthy foods.

Objective: To examine RDN perceptions of helping mothers gain sustainable access to healthy foods and assess their awareness of nutrition assistance programs.

Study Design, Setting, Participants: Quantitative, cross-sectional online survey analytically framed by the Community Readiness Model. A convenience sample of 533 RDNs licensed in North Carolina was recruited using the North Carolina Board of Nutrition's public database.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: RDNs answered demographic questions prior to the survey. The survey asked participants to rate their perception of the importance of helping food insecure mothers and if they felt helping was within their scope of practice. Participants were also asked about their awareness of nutrition assistance programs. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Mann-Whitney U test, and Spearman's correlation; $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results: Participants were mostly White women (90%). Ninety-eight percent of all RDNs perceived helping mothers with food access as important. RDNs who perceived helping as important felt helping is never out of their scope of practice; $U = 660$, $P < 0.05$. Perceived importance was inversely associated with scope of practice; $rs(531) =$

Continued on page S47