



Improving Health Care, One Meal at a Time

“We think food has long been overlooked as a way to better manage health,” said Caroline Carney, director of client services and a registered dietitian nutritionist at Boston, Mass.-based Good Measures™.*

Carney is part of the Good Measures team working with Tufts Health Plan to change the paradigm around nutrition-responsive conditions like diabetes, obesity, heart disease, cancer and even pregnancy and transgender hormone replacement therapies.

“They’re all affected by what people eat,” Carney said. “Traditionally, as a society, we don’t look at **food as medicine**. We’re trying to change that. And with the help of Tufts Health Plan, we’re improving the quality of life for thousands of people.”

Tufts Health Plan rolled out the Good Measures services in 2016. Today, **3,000 members are enrolled** in the program.

HIGH-TOUCH + HIGH-TECH

Good Measures combines the expertise of registered dietitians with state-of-the-art digital technology to help people make healthy lifestyle changes to prevent or better manage health conditions.

Each member starts out with their own registered dietitian nutrition coach and the Good Measures **smartphone app and website**. To build awareness around food choices, the app allows members to track meals and snacks, nutritional balance and exercise. With each meal, members see their Good Measures Index — a number between 1 and 100 — that shows how well they are meeting their personal nutrition needs and their nutrient excesses and deficits. The higher the number, the better.

The technology allows members and coaches to set goals and monitor progress. Members can use the app to see healthy meals and snacks designed just for them and have meal suggestions sent to their phone.

Members have convenient access to their nutrition coaches via secure messaging, email or phone — days, nights and weekends. So, members who don’t have a smartphone or prefer paper logs to track their food intake still benefit from the service.

Best of all, there’s no limit to how often members can message or talk with their nutrition coaches.

JUST RIGHT FOR HIGH-RISK

The Good Measures technology is designed to address nutrition gaps “but always in the context of what people like to eat. We think about where they’re from and their culture,” said Carney.

“The way that Good Measures offers **individualized diets based on culturally appropriate menus** is a real differentiator,” said Duke Dufresne, medical director for Tufts Health Public Plans. “We have a diverse membership and know it’s essential to offer suggestions based on cultural preferences and dietary needs.”

The service also offers **counseling in 300 languages**. Members not fluent in English can call the language line to connect with their nutrition coach and an interpreter. Good Measures follows up those calls with educational materials in multiple languages as needed.

LOOKING AHEAD

Together with Good Measures, Tufts Health Plan has targeted diabetic and high-risk members through outreach. Based on success to date, Tufts Health Plan is expanding the service to members with or at high risk for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma and heart failure.

In April 2018, Tufts Health Plan will launch an **innovative community service program** with Good Measures, the Greater Boston Food Bank and Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA). This will include a mobile market in CHA’s Revere Health Center where community members can access fresh produce and get Good Measures counseling at no cost.

“We want to show that access to high-quality food and nutrition counseling can move the dial on improving health outcomes and reducing health care costs,” said Carl Paratore, Tufts Health Plan’s general auditor and a Greater Boston Food Bank advisory board member.

“By bringing a health plan and service provider to the table with the Greater Boston Food Bank, we’ll have real data to determine the cost savings from addressing health this way,” Carney explained.

“It’s exciting,” Carney added. “What we’re doing with Tufts Health Plan is very innovative.”

*Tufts Health Plan has a minority ownership interest in Good Measures.