Why addressing food insecurity and promoting local food systems is good for the health of New Mexico

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My story with local food

- Born & raised on the Navajo Nation
- Cultural & local food was always present growing up
- Working with grandmother in corn & squash field
- Butchering and preparing sheep
- Gathering with family on the weekends
- Learning traditional food practices from family
Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. 

Social Determinants of Health in Nutrition in My Community

- Navajo citizens are disproportionately impacted by diet-related diseases.
- 3 in 4 Navajo residents express some level of food insecurity.¹
- USDA defines the Navajo Nation as a food desert.²
- 51% travel off reservation for groceries and travel 155-240 miles round trip.²
- 1 out of every 4 residents do not have access to indoor plumbing or electricity.²

How supporting local food shapes my practice

- 11% of New Mexico residents are AI/AN\(^1\)
- Health professionals and policymakers are realizing increasing access to local food can improve health of individuals and community\(^2\)
- Supporting local food initiatives is imperative to community health, especially for food insecure regions, to increase access to healthful foods.


No running water. No electricity. On Navajo Nation, coronavirus creates worry and confusion as cases surge


How supporting local food shapes my practice

- Improving access to local food via farmers markets was associated with increased f/v consumption.¹

- Increasing access to local food and encouraging food insecure community members can be one way to address the SDOH.

- Recognize health is multi-faceted and must involve advocacy at social, economical, & political levels to improve community health and food environments.

Local food starts with the family