



# Shop Healthy NYC

Year 1 Evaluation Report – West Farms and Fordham, Bronx

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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# **Shop Healthy NYC**

## **Year 1 - West Farms and Fordham, Bronx**

### **Final Evaluation Report**

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## Executive Summary

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Access to affordable healthy food is critical to good health. Shop Healthy NYC (Shop Healthy) is a New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) initiative, in partnership with the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, launched in 2012 that aims to increase access to healthier food in low-income neighborhoods with high rates of diet-related chronic disease. Shop Healthy creates sustainable changes at multiple levels of the local food supply by:

- 1) reaching out to food retailers to increase stock and promotion of healthier foods;
- 2) collaborating with suppliers/distributors to promote healthier foods and to facilitate wholesale purchases of these foods; and
- 3) engaging community members to support participating retailers and increase demand for healthier foods.

This evaluation, conducted by the NYC Health Department, looks at Year 1 of Shop Healthy, which was implemented for 12 months, from May 2012 to May 2013, in the West Farms (zip code 10460) and Fordham (zip code 10458) neighborhoods of the Bronx. The neighborhoods have a total population of approximately 140,000 people, as well as more than 250 community groups, more than 200 bodegas and supermarkets, 15 Green Carts (mobile food carts that offer fresh fruits and vegetables in NYC neighborhoods with limited access to healthy foods), and 3 farmers' markets.

The evaluation of Year 1 included in-store assessments of supermarkets and bodegas in intervention and control zip codes at pre and post, surveys of store owners and managers participating in Shop Healthy at pre and post, and street intercept surveys of 500 community residents in intervention neighborhoods at pre and post.

### KEY FINDINGS

Shop Healthy increased the stock and promotion of healthier foods in neighborhood stores and raised awareness about healthy eating among store owners and community residents. Specifically, evaluation findings showed that Shop Healthy:

#### Increased Advertising for Healthy Products

- Shop Healthy staff posted advertisements for healthier foods and beverages in 170 bodegas and supermarkets in the intervention neighborhoods, shifting the ratio of unhealthy to healthy ads from roughly 11:1 to 1:1.
- Shop Healthy staff posted advertisements for healthier deli options (e.g., sandwiches on whole wheat bread and meal combos that include fruit and water), increasing the percentage of stores advertising healthy deli options from 2% to 45% among stores with delis.
- The percentage of stores advertising healthy items more than doubled, from 42% at baseline to 90% after the intervention.
- The average number of advertisements for healthy foods and beverages increased 7-fold, from 1 at baseline to 7 after the intervention.

#### Improved Stock and Promotion of Healthy Foods and Beverages

Shop Healthy staff provided technical assistance to a subset of stores that chose to participate in the intensive component of the intervention. These stores focused on making seven changes to improve inventory and the promotion of healthier foods. There were statistically significant increases in the

number of stores meeting Shop Healthy criteria among those stores (N=63) participating at the conclusion of the program:

- Ninety-eight percent of stores featured Shop Healthy marketing materials, compared with 13% at baseline. (Some stores had marketing materials at baseline from a previous NYC Health Department program.)
- Almost all (95%) offered healthier snacks compared with 67% at baseline.
- Almost all (95%) featured produce at the front of the store or cash register, compared with 79% at baseline.
- The percentage of stores stocking healthier canned goods (lower sodium goods and canned fruit in 100% juice) increased from 60% to 78%.
- Three quarters of stores displayed refrigerated low-calorie drinks and water at eye level, up from 45% at baseline.
- The percentage of stores offering healthier deli options (sandwiches on whole wheat bread and meal combos that include fruit and water) increased from 4% to 77%.
- The percentage of stores with an entry door free of advertising doubled from 29% to 60%.

#### **Prompted Healthier Purchases**

- Of the more than 500 community residents who participated in a street intercept survey, nearly two-thirds (65%) reported seeing Shop Healthy materials in a bodega or supermarket in the neighborhood.
- Of respondents who saw any Shop Healthy materials, 64% said that a sign made them consider purchasing the healthier option advertised, and 49% actually purchased an advertised product.
- Eighty-four percent of people who saw Shop Healthy signs said the materials made them think about eating healthier.

#### **Increased Sales and Profits**

- The majority of store owners participating in the intensive component of the intervention at the conclusion of the program (of 51 surveyed) reported that since participating in Shop Healthy, sales of healthier foods had increased (59%), and that profits had either increased (42%) or stayed the same (46%).

#### **Increased Knowledge about Healthy Foods among Food Retailers**

- Store owners/managers participating in the intensive component of the intervention reported significant increases in self-reported knowledge about healthier foods. Among store owners and managers participating in Shop Healthy at the conclusion of the program:
  - Forty-two percent *strongly agreed* that they know which snacks are healthier, compared to 19% at baseline.
  - Forty percent *strongly agreed* that they know which canned goods are healthier, compared to 4% at baseline.
  - Fifty-two percent *strongly agreed* that they know how to select high-quality produce, compared with 29% at baseline.

#### **Developed Relationships with Suppliers & Distributors**

- Shop Healthy worked with suppliers/distributors to identify a total of 2,300 healthier products in their existing inventories and to promote them to retailers and worked with these entities to increase purchases of these products through strategies such as highlighting products to food

retailers in supplier warehouses and promoting products to customers through in-store radio advertisements.

**Reached Community Groups**

- Overall, 48 community organizations partnered with Shop Healthy by participating in Adopt a Shop, in which community members work with their local retailer to support the store in making healthy changes e.g., by holding a cooking demonstration using store products); attending trainings; promoting participating food retailers; and informing their members of how to support food retail changes in their neighborhood.
- Shop Healthy staff conducted 34 Adopt a Shop trainings with 470 attendees and 6 nutrition trainings with 140 attendees.
- More than 3,000 promotional materials (e.g., signs, flyers) were distributed and maps of participating food retailers were posted at nearly 200 businesses.

## I. Background

### A. SHOP HEALTHY NYC OVERVIEW

Access to affordable healthy food is critical to good health. New York City is home to hundreds of supermarkets, thousands of bodegas (corner stores), nearly a thousand mobile fruit and vegetable vendors (including Green Carts), and more than 140 farmers' markets, each of which plays a role in the health of city residents.

Shop Healthy NYC (Shop Healthy) is a New York City Health Department initiative, in partnership with the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity that aims to increase access to healthier food and engage residents and organizations to support sustainable changes to the food retail landscape in their communities. The program, launched in 2012, grew out of almost a decade of work with more than 1,000 bodegas in low-income areas. Shop Healthy builds upon this work by taking a more holistic approach to food retail change. Shop Healthy concentrates programmatic efforts in one neighborhood at a time in order to saturate the area with consistent messaging, engage all potential participants, and create positive changes across the neighborhood food environment.

Shop Healthy creates sustainable changes at multiple levels of the local food supply by:

- (1) reaching out to food retailers to increase stock and promotion of healthier foods;
- (2) collaborating with suppliers/distributors to promote healthier foods and to facilitate wholesale purchases of these foods; and
- (3) engaging community members to support participating retailers and increase demand for healthier foods.

### Shop Healthy NYC addresses both supply and demand



## Retailers

Shop Healthy primarily works with bodegas and supermarkets in two phases to promote healthier options:

- Phase 1: Staff visit all supermarkets and bodegas to conduct an in-store assessment, post Shop Healthy marketing materials, and recruit retailers to participate in Phase 2 of the intervention.
- Phase 2: Staff work more intensively with stores that choose to participate to make feasible and impactful changes to the inventory of healthier products and their placement and promotion.

Shop Healthy uses specific criteria to encourage bodegas and supermarkets participating in Phase 2 to stock healthier products, place them in highly visible locations throughout the store, and promote these items through advertising.

### Shop Healthy Criteria for Bodegas and Supermarkets

<b>Product</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stock healthier deli options (e.g., turkey sandwich on whole-wheat bread)</li><li>• Stock healthier canned goods (e.g., lower sodium beans/soup/vegetables* &amp; fruit in 100% juice)</li><li>• Stock two healthy snacks† (e.g., nuts, dried fruit)</li></ul>
<b>Placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display water &amp; low-calorie‡ refrigerated drinks at eye level</li><li>• Display produce at the front of the store or at checkout</li></ul>
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feature an entry door free of advertising</li><li>• Post Shop Healthy marketing materials</li></ul>

\*Canned beans and vegetables must contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving; soup must contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving.

†Snacks must contain, per serving,  $\leq 200$  calories,  $\leq 7$ g total fat,  $\leq 2$ g saturated fat, 0g trans fat,  $\leq 200$ mg sodium,  $\leq 10$ g sugar, and  $\geq 2$ g specific exceptions for nuts, seeds, and nut butters; fruit and vegetable products with no added sugar; and granola bars with nuts or seeds as the main ingredient .

‡ Beverages must contain  $\leq 25$  calories per 8 oz.

Shop Healthy staff provide technical assistance to stores that participate in Phase 2 to facilitate stocking and preparing healthier foods. Staff also provide incentives to help stores make these changes, including: wicker baskets and floor/counter display stands for displaying produce or other healthier foods, and salad starter kits and blenders that enable retailers to sell value-added goods and minimize loss from perishable produce. Additionally, Shop Healthy promotes participating retailers throughout the community, and retailers who meet all of the criteria receive a Proclamation from an elected official to formally recognize their achievements.

Shop Healthy also works with retailers such as farmers' markets and fruit and vegetable vendors, which already sell healthy foods. By providing them with marketing materials, promoting them in the community, and connecting them with nearby organizations that support their business, Shop Healthy helps create a foundation for sustainability.

## Suppliers & Distributors

Shop Healthy works with suppliers/distributors to ensure that retailers can easily identify and purchase healthier products to sell to their customers. Working at this level of the food supply chain helps stores to maintain improvements beyond the duration of the program and may also have impacts on retailers outside of the selected neighborhoods as many suppliers/distributors have a citywide (or nationwide) presence.

Shop Healthy identifies the major suppliers/distributors serving retailers in the neighborhood, to develop relationships, and to help them identify items from their existing inventory that meet the Shop Healthy criteria. Suppliers/distributors are then offered a menu of suggested activities from which to choose what works best for their business model to impact the purchasing, affordability, or promotion of healthier products to retailers.

## Shop Healthy Activities for Suppliers & Distributors

Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Sell Sheets:</b> Create one-page order sheets for retailers that showcase selected items that fit the Shop Healthy criteria.</li></ul>
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pricing:</b> Provide a discount to retailers on items that fit the Shop Healthy criteria.</li><li>• <b>Coupons:</b> Create in-store coupons that give consumers a discount on items that fit the Shop Healthy criteria.</li></ul>
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Placement:</b> Ensure that healthier items are displayed prominently in retail floor and shelf plans.</li><li>• <b>Samples:</b> Expose potential customers to healthier products by promoting items that fit the Shop Healthy criteria through buy one, get one free (BOGO) sales campaigns.</li><li>• <b>Demos:</b> Provide retailers with promotional quantities of healthier items for use in tasting/sampling events.</li></ul>

## Community

The Shop Healthy model engages residents as partners in creating and sustaining food retail change. Staff reach out to all local community groups as well as nontraditional community sites, such as barber shops and pharmacies, in the selected neighborhood to encourage them to participate in the Adopt a Shop program. Groups that Adopt a Shop work with their local retailer to make healthy changes. Participants conduct activities that create demand for healthier products (e.g., cooking demonstrations), improve the promotion of healthy foods (e.g., moving a selection of fruits or vegetables to the checkout to increase impulse purchases of healthier items), and/or promote the retailer in the community. Shop Healthy staff offer technical assistance throughout the process and provide incentives that groups can give to their “adopted” stores to build goodwill and support their efforts. Community groups that wish to participate in Shop Healthy, but not in Adopt a Shop, may do so by engaging in one or more activities to support the program, such as informing their constituents about Shop Healthy, promoting retailers participating in the program, and/or attending nutrition trainings.

## **B. YEAR 1: WEST FARMS AND FORDHAM**

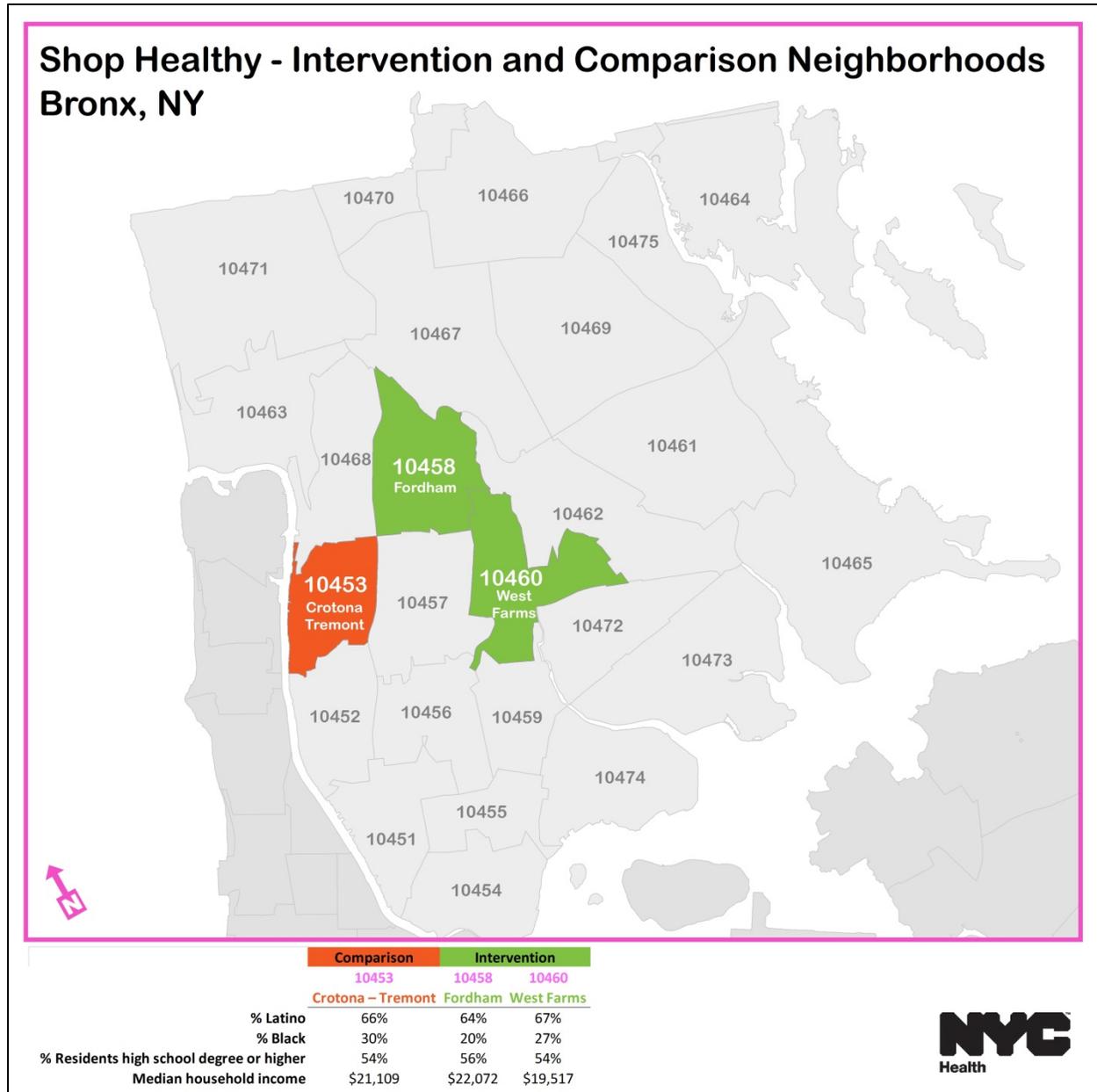
Year 1 of Shop Healthy was implemented in the Bronx neighborhoods of West Farms (zip code 10460) and Fordham (zip code 10458) from May 2012 through May 2013. Poor health is disproportionately concentrated in low-income neighborhoods, and household income is a predictor of fruit and vegetable consumption. Both of the chosen neighborhoods have high rates of poverty (West Farms: 38.5% and Fordham: 38.3%), compared with a citywide rate of 20%.<sup>i</sup> They were also identified as being in “high need” of fresh food purveyors by the NYC Department of City Planning, which highlighted neighborhoods with the highest levels of diet-related diseases and largest populations with limited opportunities to purchase fresh foods in a supermarket need index.<sup>ii</sup> Residents reported low levels of fruit and vegetable consumption; approximately one in five residents reported eating no servings of fruits or vegetables the previous day, according to the Community Health Survey.<sup>iii</sup>

Many Bronx residents want high-quality, healthy foods: in a survey conducted by the Bronx Borough President’s Office, nearly half of the 2,000 respondents identified access to high-quality fruits and vegetables as a top priority.<sup>iv</sup> Shop Healthy staff held a series of “Community Conversations” in the selected neighborhoods and found that residents were also concerned about both the proliferation of unhealthy foods and the lack of high-quality healthy foods available in their neighborhood. The Adopt a Shop model, which empowers residents to act as agents of change in their local stores, resonated with participants as a way to actively improve the health of their community. West Farms and Fordham were good target neighborhoods for Shop Healthy because of this interest from community members and the rich network of resources and partnerships already in place. Existing partnerships included the NYC Health Department’s Bronx District Public Health Office, the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Dr., NY State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx Health Reach, and the Urban Health Plan.

## **C. EVALUATION COMPONENTS**

This report details the NYC Health Department’s evaluation of Year 1 of Shop Healthy in West Farms and Fordham. The evaluation comprised three key components:

- (1) *In-store assessments* were conducted pre and post Phase 1 and 2 in bodegas and supermarkets in the intervention neighborhoods and in a comparison neighborhood to measure changes in the food retail environment. Crotona-Tremont (10453) was chosen as a comparison neighborhood because of its similar demographic profile and proximity to the intervention neighborhoods (see below).



- (2) *Store owner/manager surveys* were conducted at pre and post with store owners/managers participating in Phase 2 of the retail intervention to measure changes in capacity and knowledge of healthier foods and the impact of in-store changes on store sales and profits.
- (3) *Street intercept surveys* were conducted at pre and post in the intervention neighborhoods to assess reach and penetration of the initiative, as well as the impact of food retail changes on community residents.

## II. Evaluation Results and Program Outcomes

The evaluation results and program outcomes are described below for each of the elements of Shop Healthy: retailers, suppliers/distributors, and community.

### A. RETAILERS

Changes in the food retail environment were measured through in-store assessments and surveys of store owners and managers.

#### Phase 1

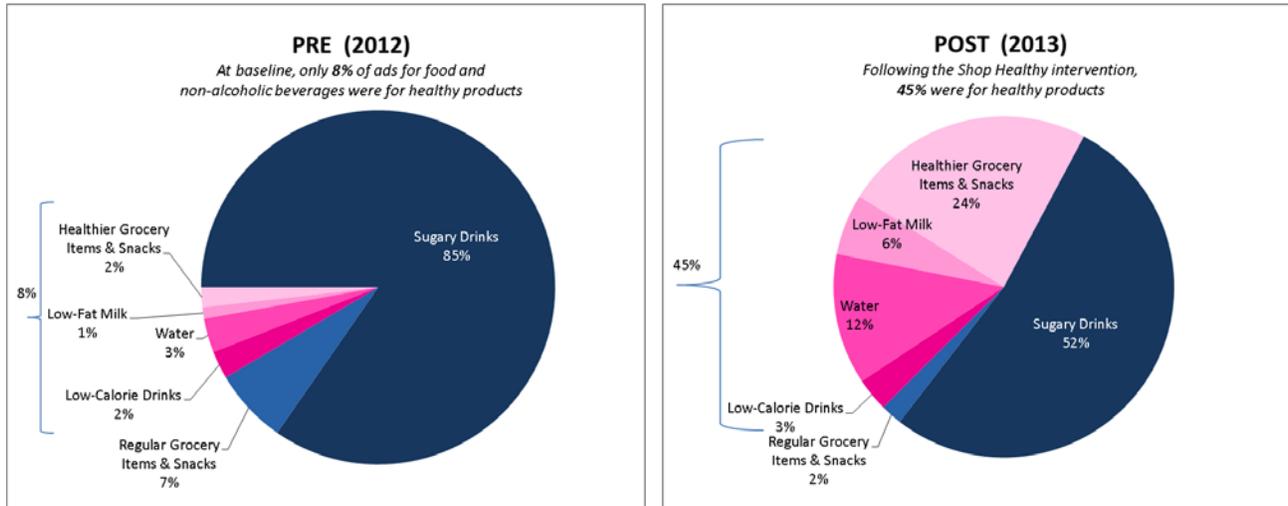
Staff visited all supermarkets and bodegas in West Farms and Fordham to introduce themselves to the store staff and ask permission to post Shop Healthy marketing materials highlighting a variety of healthier foods, including fresh produce, lower sodium canned goods, whole wheat bread, water, and low-fat milk, as well as menu signs for healthier deli options (sandwiches on whole wheat bread and breakfast and lunch meal combos that include fruit and water rather than the standard chips and soda).

At this time, staff also conducted the in-store assessment in both the intervention and comparison neighborhoods. The assessment measured availability and promotional placement of specific foods and beverages, and the presence of advertising for both healthy and unhealthy products. In the intervention neighborhood, baseline store assessments were conducted from May through August 2012, and follow-up assessments were conducted from March through May 2013. In the comparison neighborhood of Crotona-Tremont, baseline assessments were conducted in May and June 2012 and follow-up occurred in March and April 2013. Stores were visited up to three times to complete the assessment. Participation was high. Of the 207 stores in the intervention zip codes, 175 permitted staff to conduct the store assessment at baseline, for a participation rate of 85%. At follow-up, 164 of the baseline stores allowed another assessment, for a participation rate of 94%. In the comparison zip code, 70 out of 76 stores permitted the store assessment at baseline, for a 92% participation rate, and the follow-up participation rate was 96%. In both intervention and control areas, bodegas comprised 91% of all stores.

#### **Impact: Shop Healthy Increased Advertising for Healthy Products and Healthy Deli Options**

In the intervention neighborhoods, staff shifted the ratio of unhealthy to healthy advertisements from roughly 11:1 to 1:1 by posting marketing materials at the initial assessment visit (permitted by 170 stores), as shown in the figure below. During the post assessments conducted several months later, the majority of stores (84%) still featured Shop Healthy advertising, and the ratio of unhealthy to healthy advertisements was still roughly even. Overall, from the initial assessment to the post assessment, the percentage of stores advertising healthy items more than doubled, from 42% to 90%, and the average number of ads for healthy foods and beverages increased 7-fold, from 1 to 7. This represents a substantial and sustained change in the advertising environment in the intervention neighborhoods.

## Shop Healthy Dramatically Increased Healthy Advertising



Shop Healthy staff posted advertisements for healthy products at 170 supermarkets and bodegas, dramatically shifting the ratio of unhealthy to healthy ads in intervention neighborhoods.

Outreach during Phase 1 also resulted in substantial changes to the number of healthier offerings at store delis. While only two stores in the intervention neighborhoods posted signs promoting healthier options (e.g., sandwiches on whole wheat bread and meal combos with fruit or water) prior to the store assessment, roughly half of the stores with delis (66 of 133 stores) agreed to post such signs at the store assessment. (The Shop Healthy deli signs were posted only by stores that could immediately offer the healthier menu options. The signs advertise healthier options that use ingredients that tend to be readily available to store owners but may not be promoted to customers. The price is prominently displayed along with a photo of the product, to make it easy and attractive for customers to purchase the healthier item.) At follow-up, 45% of stores with delis (57 of 128 stores) advertised healthier deli options, with 56 of the 57 stores using Shop Healthy signage.

These achievements were not observed in the control zip code between pre and post assessments. In fact, the ratio of unhealthy to healthy ads *increased* from roughly 6:1 to 8:1, and the availability of healthier deli options *decreased* – from being offered in just two stores to only one at follow-up

### Phase 2

Ninety-six stores were recruited to participate in Phase 2 of Shop Healthy. Of these, 63 were still actively participating at the conclusion of the intervention. Reasons for attrition included difficulty in reaching the store owner or manager, changes in store ownership, and waning motivation of owners.

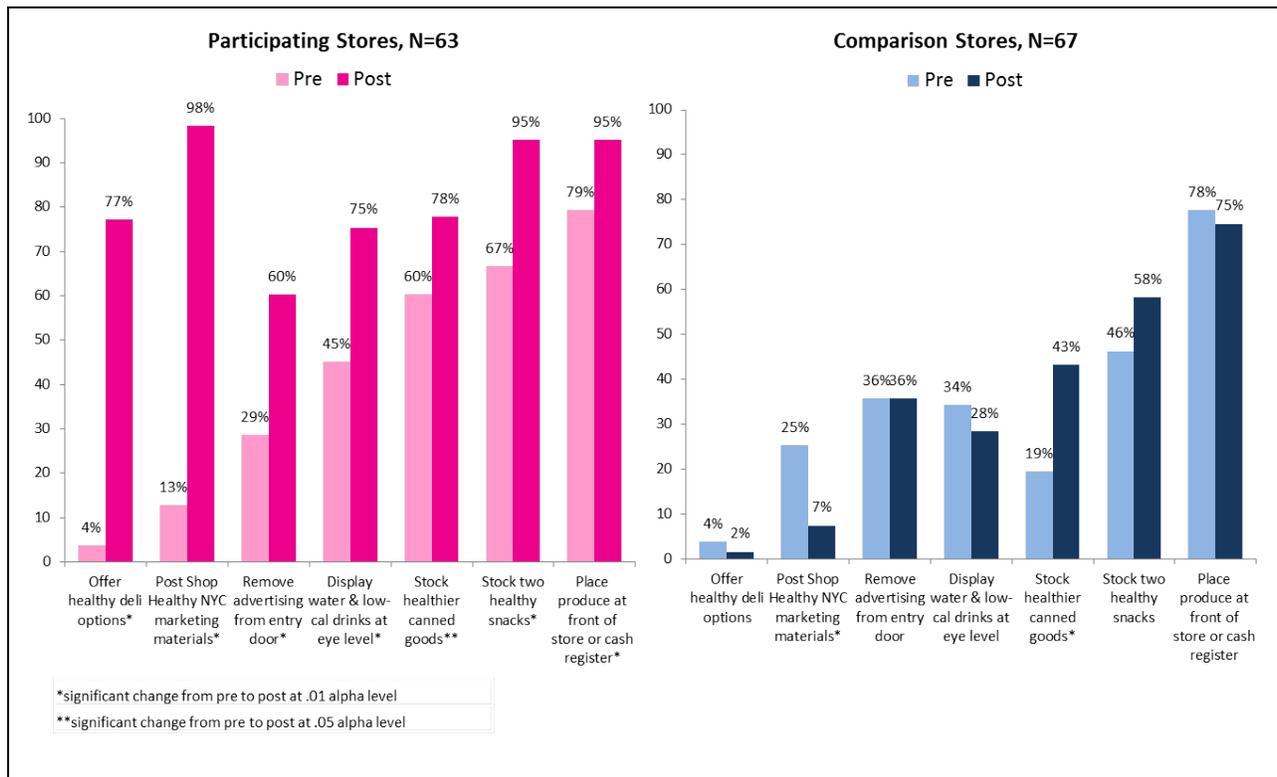
Outreach staff visited stores regularly to assist them in meeting the Shop Healthy criteria and provide technical assistance. Technical assistance included offering owners/managers a Shop Healthy-developed, seven-module training that provides basic nutrition education and educates owners about creating a healthier store environment; purchasing more nutritious foods; and storing, displaying, and promoting healthier products. Seventy percent of stores received at least one training module, with each trained store receiving an average of three modules.

In all, 387 visits were conducted to the 63 stores that were active at the conclusion of the intervention, with an average of six visits per store. Forty-two stores received a proclamation (a formal document recognizing stores for their achievements) for meeting all 7 criteria from Bronx Borough President Ruben Díaz Jr. and New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera.

**Impact: Shop Healthy Improved Stock and Promotion of Healthy Foods and Beverages**

The average number of criteria met by participating stores increased significantly from 3.1 at baseline to 5.8 at follow-up ( $p < .0001$ ), while the number of criteria met by comparison stores did not change (2.6 vs. 2.6,  $p = .70$ ). When each criterion was analyzed, stores participating in Phase 2 of the intervention had pre/post increases that were significantly greater than control stores for 6 of the 7 criteria (all except stocking healthier canned goods). The figure below shows the change from pre to post for Phase 2 intervention stores and control stores. Some retailers made improvements beyond the criteria outlined in the program, including stocking low-fat milk, whole wheat bread, and more produce, and improving their produce displays.

**Shop Healthy Stores Increased their Stock and Promotion of Healthy Foods**



Surveys were conducted with store owners and managers participating in Phase 2 to measure change in knowledge of healthier foods and impact of in-store changes on sales of healthier foods and store profits. Eighty-three store owners completed the baseline survey, and of the 63 stores active at the conclusion of Phase 2, 51\* completed the post survey.

\* Two of the 51 stores that completed the post survey did not complete a baseline survey; analyses comparing pre/post answers are limited to 49 stores that completed both a pre and post survey.

**Impact: Shop Healthy Increased Sales and Profits**

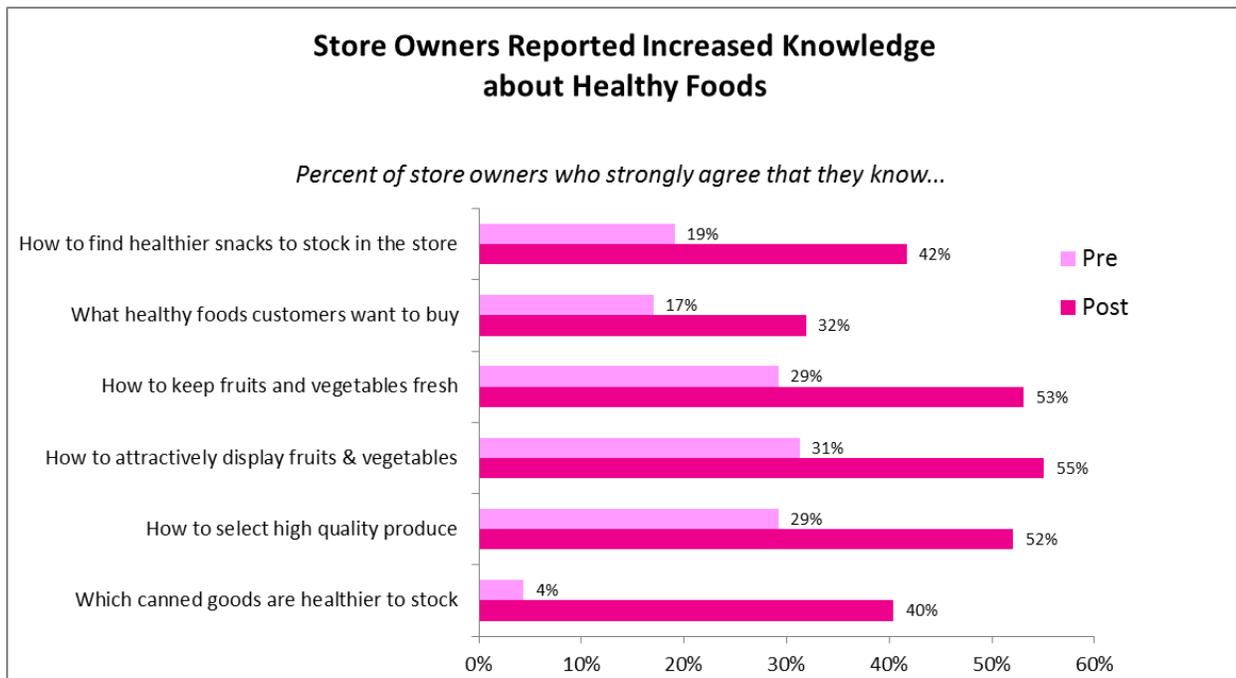
The majority of store owners/managers (59%) reported that since participating in Shop Healthy, sales of healthier foods had increased and that overall profits had either increased (42%) or stayed the same (46%). Some respondents specifically attributed these increases to selling more produce (N=11) and whole wheat sandwiches and bread (N=4). Several store owners/managers (N=6) also commented that customers seem more knowledgeable about and are requesting healthier foods.

**Impact: Shop Healthy Improved Owners’ Perceptions of Selling Healthier Foods**

The proportion of store owners who *strongly disagreed* with the statement that “selling healthy foods is risky because customers will not buy them” more than doubled between baseline (22%) and follow-up (46%).

**Impact: Shop Healthy Increased Knowledge about Healthier Foods**

Store owners were asked a series of questions on their self-rated knowledge about healthier canned goods, snacks, and produce. Each item was scored on a four-point scale, from strongly disagree (1) that they were knowledgeable to strongly agree (4) that they were knowledgeable. These questions were used to create a six-item knowledge scale.<sup>†</sup> There was a significant increase in self-rated knowledge (3.16 vs 3.40,  $p=.002$ ) overall, along with substantial increases across all areas assessed, as shown in the figure below.<sup>‡</sup>



Store owners were asked to share the most important thing they had learned from participating in Shop Healthy. Several said they had learned what foods are healthy and about eating healthier (N=15); of those, some owners mentioned learning about specific products related to the Shop Healthy criteria

<sup>†</sup> Pre-scale, Cronbach’s Alpha=.86, Post-scale, Cronbach’s Alpha=.90

<sup>‡</sup> In some cases a different respondent was surveyed at pre versus at post; when limiting analysis to the 30 respondents who were the same at pre/post, the trend was the same.

(such as baked chips and canned goods), and one mentioned improving her own diet. Another common owner response (N=13) was that they had learned how to better sell and promote healthier foods through improved displays and signage. One commented that she had learned “how to stock healthier foods and organize them better,” saying that “nicer displays catch customers’ attention.” Others remarked that customers had commented on their signs and that the signs encouraged customers to try new products. Two mentioned having a more positive view of the city and government, saying that the city offers help and cares about the community and that the government is concerned about the health of Bronx youth and other residents.

## **B. SUPPLIERS & DISTRIBUTORS**

Shop Healthy has initiated groundbreaking partnerships with distributors as part of its work to improve healthier food options across the city. Shop Healthy established relationships with three suppliers/distributors (Krasdale, White Rose, and Jetro) and one manufacturer that distributes its products directly to retailers (Goya). Krasdale services approximately 800 bodegas and 300 supermarkets in New York City; White Rose supplies 2,000 bodegas and supermarkets; and Jetro, a cash and carry wholesale store where retailers select, pay for, and transport their own merchandise orders, supplies nearly all bodegas in the city.

### **Impact: Suppliers & Distributors Identified and Promoted Healthier Products**

Shop Healthy staff assisted Jetro, White Rose, and Krasdale to identify healthier products in their inventory. A total of 2,300 products were identified that met the NYC Food Standards<sup>§</sup> criteria. Suppliers/distributors then promoted these products through sell sheets and in their catalogues, making it easier for retailers to identify and purchase healthier options.

At its wholesale warehouses throughout the city, Jetro committed to and began promoting healthier items that met the NYC Food Standards using magnets, banners, and posters. Shop Healthy staff were granted access to the warehouses to post magnets identifying healthier products at the point-of-selection.

Feedback from the store owner surveys indicates that these promotional materials made an impact among stores participating in the initiative. Jetro was a supplier for 95% of the bodegas surveyed at post (36 of 38 bodegas). Almost two-thirds (64%) of these bodega owners/managers had seen “Shop Healthy Here” magnets when shopping at Jetro. Most of these owners/managers (69%) said the signs led them to consider buying a new product, and two stores reported buying a new product because of the signs.

Krasdale created five in-store 10-second advertisements that listed four Shop Healthy messages about shopping for 100% whole wheat bread, low-fat milk, lower sodium canned vegetables and fruit canned in 100% juice, and water. The advertisements were broadcast in 300 stores citywide.

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<sup>§</sup> To identify healthier products, Shop Healthy uses the New York City Food Standards, citywide procurement standards that outline specific nutrition criteria for nutrients such as fat, calories, and sodium. Items that meet the criteria are identified with a symbol, which can be placed on all materials that suppliers use to sell their products, including wholesale warehouses shelves, catalogues, and order sheets.

## **C. COMMUNITY**

Shop Healthy staff reached out to more than 250 community sites in the selected area to invite them to participate in the initiative. Overall, 48 community organizations partnered with Shop Healthy by participating in Adopt a Shop, attending trainings, promoting participating food retailers, and educating their members about how to support food retail changes in their neighborhood.

Shop Healthy staff conducted 34 Adopt a Shop trainings with 470 attendees and 6 nutrition trainings with 140 attendees. Most trainings were open to the public and conducted at local libraries, while others were held at specific sites that requested the workshops for their constituents. Shop Healthy connected groups with local resources, including other Health Department programs. Five organizations were approved to receive Health Bucks (\$2 coupons that incentivize fruit and vegetable purchases at farmers' markets) for their members.

Outreach staff also conducted "canvassing" visits throughout the neighborhood to ensure community involvement on all fronts. Staff visited 220 sites in total, including salons and barbershops, pharmacies and medical/dental offices, and other nonfood retailers to inform them about the program and promote Shop Healthy locations. In total, more than 3,000 promotional materials (e.g., signs, flyers) were distributed and maps of participating food retailers were posted at nearly 200 sites.

### **Street Intercept Surveys**

Pre/post street intercept surveys were conducted with community residents in the intervention zip codes to assess reach and penetration of the initiative, as well as the impact of food retail changes on community residents. Survey questions covered demographics, food shopping behaviors, diet, and perceptions of the local food environment. In addition, the post survey included questions on exposure to and impact of Shop Healthy's in-store marketing materials. Respondents were required to be 18 years of age or older and live in West Farms or Fordham, and each respondent received a single-fare MetroCard for participating. In total, 1,010 surveys were completed, split evenly between baseline (40% response rate) and follow-up (34% response rate).

The median respondent age was 43 years (44 at baseline with a range of 18 to 87; 43 at post, range of 18 to 82). The majority of respondents were Latino (58% at baseline, 50% at follow-up) or Black (34% at baseline, 38% at follow-up). More respondents were female than male (53% at baseline, 61% at follow-up). Overall, 30% of respondents had less than a high school education, 32% were high school graduates or had their GED, and 38% had attended at least some college.

The vast majority (94%) of respondents shopped at bodegas in their neighborhood, and most were frequent bodega shoppers, with 64% of respondents reporting that they shopped at bodegas in their neighborhood an average of once per day or more. In general, respondents shopped close to home, reporting that the neighborhood bodega where they shopped most was, on average, fewer than 1.5 blocks from their home (mean=1.36). Responses to these questions were similar at pre and post.

Almost all respondents shopped at supermarkets in their neighborhoods (97%). These shoppers reported buying produce at their supermarket 1.3 times per week on average. When asked whether the supermarket the respondent shopped at most often was inside or outside their neighborhood, 84% reported that the store was in their neighborhood, with 79% of people reporting that they walk to the supermarket they go to most, taking an average of eight minutes. Almost three quarters (74%) of

respondents said they buy most of their vegetables from a supermarket, followed by fruit and vegetable stores (9%), fruit and vegetable carts (Green Carts or other carts; 6%), and bodegas (4%).

### **Impact: Shop Healthy Materials Prompted Purchases of Healthier Products and Reached a Wide Audience**

The post survey asked a series of questions about exposure to and impact of Shop Healthy’s in-store marketing materials, including shelf signs for healthier canned goods and whole wheat bread, refrigerator decals for water and low-fat milk, deli signs advertising healthier menu options, and general Shop Healthy materials (i.e., materials stating “Shop Healthy Here” or “Shop Healthy Bronx” and featuring fresh produce, but not directing customers to buy a specific product). Exposure to Shop Healthy materials was high:

- 65% of respondents to the post survey reported seeing Shop Healthy materials in a bodega or supermarket in the neighborhood.

Of people who saw any Shop Healthy materials,

- 64% said that the material made them consider purchasing the healthier option advertised,
- 49% actually purchased an advertised product, and
- 84% said the materials made them think about eating healthier.

Of respondents who saw the general Shop Healthy materials, 75% reported that the signs made them feel positively about the store.\*\*

### **Community Highlights**

Shop Healthy’s work with community groups resulted in many successful collaborations, with several highlighted below.

**Senior Housing Tenants Get a Discount on Produce:** Shop Healthy staff partnered with Serviam Gardens, an independent living complex for seniors in Fordham. Approximately 20 tenants were trained to Adopt a Shop and chose to work with their local supermarket, Met Foods. The group invited the owner of the store to their site to discuss how the store could better meet the needs of residents, who wanted less expensive produce, and in turn, how the tenants could support the store. The result of their conversation was “Serviam Senior Day”—one day each week the supermarket agreed to offer a 10% discount on fresh fruits and vegetables to all tenants. The group engaged in additional healthy living activities, including holding a movie night that featured a nutrition documentary and hosting a nutrition education workshop facilitated by a registered dietitian on the Shop Healthy staff. Finally, the group applied for and received Health Bucks to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets and participated in Health Department–led market walking tours.

**Students Create a Healthy Snack Corner:** Six classrooms from grades 3-8 at Our Lady of Mercy in West Farms teamed up with Shop Healthy to adopt their local bodega, Compare Foods, working collaboratively to create a grab-n-go healthier snack section stocked with nutritious items. To incorporate Adopt a Shop into the school day, Shop Healthy staff created a 6-week curriculum for

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\*\* To gauge the prevalence of overestimating exposure to signs, the survey also asked whether respondents had seen a series of signs that were *not* posted in the neighborhood (provided courtesy of The Food Trust and the Philadelphia Department of Health), and it was found that recognition of these “decoy” signs was 11%, which was significantly lower than recognition of Shop Healthy materials.

students that included nutrition education and other grade level–appropriate lessons. The younger students wrote letters to the store manager to request that he stock their favorite healthier foods, while the older grades visited the store manager for in-person introductions. All grades conducted healthy snack taste tests of baked chips, fresh fruit, and canned fruit in 100% juice, and then surveyed their classmates to determine the winning snack. Students also created marketing materials to post both in the school and in the store to promote the winning healthier snack and the store. The students wrapped up their work with a Shop Healthy school assembly dedicated to showcasing what they had learned.

***Health Care Organization Takes Health in a New Direction:*** Urban Health Plan (UHP), a nonprofit community health center that provides primary and specialty health care services, adopted multiple retail stores within their clinics’ neighborhoods (which include the Shop Healthy areas and beyond) and incorporated the initiative into their ongoing programming. They coordinated a team that included nutritionists, educators, a pediatrician, an outreach specialist, medical students, and a chef—and received support from the organization’s Board of Directors. The team was tasked with engaging supermarkets and other grocers in their area around the main tenets of Shop Healthy: stocking, promoting, and strategically placing healthier inventory. UHP was successful in recruiting a variety of stores, including two supermarkets (Associated Supermarket and Key Food), two bodegas (A.Z. Deli and 20/20 Deli), and a bakery. They worked with the stores to make specific changes, including creating a healthier sandwich combo, stocking water at eye level, and offering fruit for sale at the register. They also encouraged retailers to make improvements beyond the Shop Healthy criteria, such as encouraging the bakery to offer lower-fat milk at the coffee station. UHP conducted various activities to support the stores, such as taste tests and cooking demonstrations conducted by the UHP registered dietitian. To recognize retailers that participated in the program, UHP issued a press release and held a proclamation event at Key Food, attended by Senator Gustavo Rivera and the Deputy Bronx Borough President Aurelia Greene ([featured on the UHP website](#)). UHP has continued its work in these neighborhoods and has maintained a strong partnership with Shop Healthy as the program expands into additional neighborhoods.

### **III. Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

Shop Healthy is a unique public health model that seeks to improve access to healthier foods in high-need neighborhoods by working at multiple levels—with individuals who buy foods and beverages, the stores that sell them, and the suppliers/distributors that service these stores. Together, the store owners and staff, distributor partners, community members, and the Shop Healthy team achieved many successes in Year 1. Store owners and managers in the Bronx neighborhoods of Fordham and West Farms significantly increased their stock and promotion of healthier foods, suppliers/distributors worked to promote healthier foods to store owners, and community groups supported participating retailers.

Key lessons learned from Year 1 of Shop Healthy are detailed below.

#### **Retailers**

Shop Healthy improved the food retail environment in the target neighborhoods. Bodegas and supermarkets participating in Phase 2 showed significant increases in meeting the seven Shop Healthy criteria. The largest increases were in advertising for and promotion of healthier foods by posting Shop Healthy marketing materials and signs for healthier deli options. These changes require minimal effort by store owners, yet have an immediate impact on the store's appearance and shift the ratio from unhealthy to healthy ads in a positive direction. This change in the store's appearance was noticed by community members: almost 2 out of 3 community residents surveyed reported that they saw Shop Healthy materials, and roughly half of those individuals reported purchasing an advertised product.

Shop Healthy made significant improvements in stock and promotional placement of healthier products, although these improvements proved more difficult to maintain. Shop Healthy staff discovered that store staff may have less control over certain aspects of the store environment, which can pose a challenge for meeting some criteria. For example, maintaining water at eye level can be difficult if the beverage refrigerators are stocked by distributors who work from industry planograms (tools used to indicate placement of retail products on shelves) and do not typically consult store owners. This experience underscores the need to work not just with retailers, but also with distributors, and prompted the program to create new tools for Year 2. For example, the program developed a healthier beverage planogram to distribute to stores to help them maintain the healthy changes.

#### **Suppliers & Distributors**

Shop Healthy developed relationships with suppliers/distributors that service stores citywide to identify and promote the healthier items in their inventory. These relationships provided Shop Healthy staff with greater knowledge about the how the food distributors work, their practices for marketing and selling products, and the influence distributors have on the types of products sold in bodegas and supermarkets. Additionally, through its interactions with store owners, Shop Healthy learned about the types of distributors that supply goods to the stores. This prompted the program to create a broad menu of potential activities, allowing individual suppliers to choose an approach that best matches their business model and the needs of the stores they serve. It is anticipated that these relationships will continue to strengthen and expand in future iterations of the program.

#### **Community**

At the community level, Shop Healthy formed partnerships with community organizations, provided training and education to community members, and posted promotional materials in community sites throughout the neighborhoods. These collaborations are essential, and empower community members

to continue to support changes to the food retail environment beyond the official program timeframe. Successful community collaboration requires a flexible program model that is adaptable to the needs of the selected neighborhood. Community engagement efforts during Year 1 initially focused on encouraging groups to Adopt a Shop. Shop Healthy staff learned, however, that groups varied greatly in terms of capacity and resources. Not wanting to exclude groups that were interested but unable to Adopt a Shop, Shop Healthy provided alternative, less intensive ways for groups to engage in meaningful support of the program. Additionally, Shop Healthy expanded its definition of a “community organization” to include nontraditional sites such as beauty shops and laundromats. Adding these sites as supporters strengthened the program by saturating the community and generating the sense that a “movement” was afoot in the neighborhood.

This evaluation has shown that Shop Healthy impacts a neighborhood’s food retail environment in the short term; however, long-term impacts have yet to be established. To help sustain the changes beyond one year (i.e., after the program has officially ended in the selected neighborhood), Shop Healthy provides periodic support to community groups that want to Adopt a Shop and makes sustainability visits to retailers to replenish materials, provide technical assistance, and monitor maintenance of healthier changes. Additionally, the program maintains ongoing relationships with suppliers/distributors from one program year to the next. This integrated approach to improving the retail food environment, by engaging residents, retailers, and their suppliers/distributors, is key to ensuring that New Yorkers have equal access to healthier foods and beverages.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) and search *Shop Healthy* for more information including, *How to Adopt a Shop*, a guide that provides simple steps for individuals or community groups interested in working with local retailers to increase healthier offerings, and the *Shop Healthy NYC! Implementation Guide*, a resource that contains guidance for a team of staff on how to work with all major components of a food retail program: retailers, suppliers/distributors, and community members.

For groups that are implementing a food retail initiative, Shop Healthy NYC’s digital artwork for promotional items used in food retailers (e.g., shelf talkers, refrigerator decals, posters) is available at no cost; email [shophealthy@health.nyc.gov](mailto:shophealthy@health.nyc.gov) for more information.

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<sup>i</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. Accessed March 28, 2014. <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

<sup>ii</sup> New York City Department of City Planning. Going to Market: New York City's Neighborhood Grocery Store and Supermarket Shortage; 2008. Accessed March 28, 2014. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/index.shtml>.

<sup>iii</sup> New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Community Health Survey [2012]; public use dataset accessed March 25, 2014.

<sup>iv</sup> Bronx Borough President’s Office. Bronx Wellness and Quality of Life Survey. December 2011. Accessed August 15, 2013. <http://bronxboropres.nyc.gov/pdf/2011-bronx-wellness-survey-results.pdf>.