



## UNC REX Healthcare Opens Food Pantry in Partnership with Food Lion and the Food Bank

December 14, 2018

*Access to healthy food proven to help patients with healing when they return home*

RALEIGH, N.C.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--UNC REX Healthcare has opened a new Food Pantry to support patients and their families who struggle with access to healthy food.

The pantry is a partnership between UNC REX, Food Lion and the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. It's one of the first food pantries operated by a community hospital in North Carolina, and one of only a handful across the country. It will be called the UNC REX Healthcare Food Pantry Nourished by Food Lion Feeds.

"Access to nutritious and healthy food is critical when recovering from an illness, and just to stay healthier in general," said UNC REX Chief Operating Officer Ernie Bovio. "I'm proud that UNC REX is able to provide this innovative solution for our patients, with help from our collaboration with Food Lion and the Food Bank."

Patients at UNC REX who indicate that they have recently struggled with food access, or who are considered food insecure, are prescribed a visit to the Food Pantry with their hospital discharge paperwork. They will receive a three-day supply of healthy food, enough for a family of four, including fresh produce, staple items and healthy snacks.

"We believe no one should have to choose between dinner and rent, or medicine and groceries," said Food Lion President Meg Ham. "The food pantry at UNC REX Hospital is another opportunity for us to help eliminate some of those difficult choices for people in the towns and cities we serve."

In addition to providing patients with food, the UNC REX Food Pantry will also provide nutritional information, healthy recipes from UNC REX's award-winning chefs and dietitians, and a comprehensive list of food banks and other community resources. In recent years, UNC REX has evolved from a community hospital serving mostly Wake County into a regional referral center treating patients from across Eastern North Carolina.

"Access to healthy, nutritious food is one of the building blocks to good health," said Food Bank CEO Peter Werbicki. "We're very thankful for the partnership with UNC REX and Food Lion, which helps reach people in need, where they are, to improve community health and help end the cycle of hunger."

A 2017 report by the American Hospital Association explored the link between food insecurity and health issues. The [report](#) urged hospitals to help improve nutritional health in their communities. Food and nutrition experts at UNC REX recently reached out to a hospital in Boston that operates a food pantry for advice.

The UNC REX Healthcare Food Pantry Nourished by Food Lion Feeds is located near the hospital's Main Entrance and across from the REX Pharmacy. It is staffed by volunteers and operates Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to meet the needs of UNC REX patients.

**\*\*MEDIA NOTE:** To download a feature video about the UNC REX Food Pantry, as well as b-roll footage and still photos, visit this [Dropbox folder](#).

### About UNC REX Healthcare

For more than 120 years, UNC REX Healthcare has provided expert care for the Wake County community and surrounding areas. With more than 6,400 co-workers, UNC REX is a private, not-for-profit health care system and is a member of UNC Health Care. UNC REX provides various health care services throughout Wake County with facilities in Apex, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Wakefield and downtown Raleigh. To learn more, [click here](#).

### About Food Lion

Food Lion, based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, has more than 1,000 stores in 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states and employs more than 63,000 associates. By leveraging its longstanding heritage of low prices and convenient locations, Food Lion is working to own the easiest full shop grocery experience in the Southeast, anchored by a strong commitment to affordability, freshness and the communities it serves. Through Food Lion Feeds, the company has committed to provide 500 million meals to individuals and families in need by the end of 2020. Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Royal Ahold Delhaize Group. For more information, visit [www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com).

### About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that has provided food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina for more than 35 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 800 partner agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults through warehouses in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, the Sandhills (Southern Pines), and Wilmington. In fiscal year 2017-2018, the Food Bank distributed nearly 70 million pounds of food (over half of which was perishable) and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 600,000 people struggle to access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for an active and healthy life. [foodbankcenc.org](http://foodbankcenc.org).

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