

The Kellyn Healthy Neighborhood Immersion Strategy - 2025

The goal of Kellyn's Healthy Neighborhood Immersion Strategy (HNIS) is to educate and implement medically-based programs through local relationships and partner collaboration; thereby supporting a journey of healthy behavioral change for individuals and families, leading to long-term shifts in broader community social norms and improved health equity.

Neighborhoods are defined as an elementary school(s) catchment area, a certain geographic area, a group with a commonality, such as a self-insured employer, or participants in a specific medical clinic or insurance plan.

The Healthy Neighborhood Immersion Strategy encompasses Kellyn's four main initiatives: Kellyn Schools, Kellyn Food Access, Kellyn Kitchens, and Kellyn Lifestyle Medicine. Each of these initiatives are effective individually; but the sum of all four as one cohesive initiative synergistically expands the impact. In addition, collaboration with local farmers, school districts, municipalities, non-profits, business leaders, healthcare providers and healthcare insurers extend the reach of the HNIS.

A valuable byproduct of the HNIS is the training and mentorship for resident physicians and medical students, along with internships for dietetic and undergraduate students that rotate with Kellyn, providing invaluable, community-based, lifestyle-focused education to our future medical leaders.

The Kellyn Schools Initiative:

Launched in 2009, Kellyn Schools provides critical investment in the education of the next generation of adults during their formative years when habits are becoming solidified. Secondly, the initiative simultaneously engages the teachers and families. Practical and actionable education of children, teachers and families leads them to make healthier choices in the present, as well as supporting the long-term goal of building a cadre of healthy lifestyle champions in each neighborhood. Children play a particularly significant role in the process of social change within their family and neighborhood.

The initiative focuses on the education of our elementary school children with the objective of teaching students about healthy food and healthy lifestyle choices, growing their own nutrient-dense produce in school gardens and training their taste buds to enjoy healthy food options. Our educational programs involve longitudinal curriculum that aligns with Pennsylvania state standards and occurs in each individual classroom; serving all students in the targeted grades, as compared to large auditorium or after-school programming.

Our third-grade program, "Eat Real Food," focuses on defining what food options provide the most beneficial nutrition for our bodies and encourages the student to train their body to be healthier by adding more real food into their daily diet. This program aligns with the third-grade science curriculum standards.

The fourth-grade program, "Healthy Choices," focuses on understanding the nutrition labels on packaged goods; encouraging the children to become a food detective and make healthier choices more often, such as water over sugar-sweetened beverages. This program aligns with the fourth-grade math curriculum standards.

The fifth-grade program, “Eating Out Survival Skills,” focuses on understanding the nutrition information on menus at local restaurants and how to be a food detective to find the healthiest choices when eating outside their home. This program aligns with the fifth-grade health curriculum standards.

The “Garden as a Classroom” program combines all the elements of the in-classroom programs and takes the student on a journey from seed to harvest, understanding the value of farming and providing the opportunity for the students to eat food that they grew in their school garden. All our programs are presented on a class-by-class basis, allowing for interactive engagement and questions throughout.

The Kellyn Food Access Initiative:

Launched in 2016, Kellyn Food Access ensures each neighborhood has healthy, whole food options on a year-round basis that are convenient, accessible, and affordable. Participants shop and have personal choices. The initiative provides a wide range of health-promoting grocery staples, produce and healthy prepared meals, while supporting a strong neighborhood food infrastructure that includes the “Eat Real Food Mobile Market” at accessible sites on a consistent weekly basis year-round.

Kellyn prioritizes purchasing from local farms and is a catalyst for building the local food infrastructure. With overall health as the priority, Kellyn provides year-round service and supplements the local farm food with non-local produce as needed.

In addition to fresh produce and grocery staples like whole grains, nuts and legumes, Kellyn offers Lifestyle Medicine Meals (LMM) that are prepared, whole food, plant-forward meals to support our participants; thereby promoting healthy lifestyles and demonstrating that the nutrient-dense foods that nourish our health can be satisfying, delicious and convenient.

The “Eat Real Food Mobile Market” team manages multiple healthy food and produce prescription voucher programs. Once a participant or household is authorized to receive a voucher and has completed the initial approval process, they are automatically entered into our point-of-sale platform as a voucher participant. This process provides a dignified, respectful, and non-discriminatory way to offer healthy food options to participants of all demographics, without isolating those who are receiving assistance. In addition to the produce prescription/food vouchers, Kellyn accepts FMNP and SNAP.

With healthy, convenient, and affordable food as the draw for many households, the “Eat Real Food Mobile Market” becomes a weekly destination. Kellyn engages collaborating partners such as behavioral health counseling, workforce development, legal resource services, housing support entities, and healthcare providers to join with us on a regular basis to maximize the support for the individuals and families that participate.

The Kellyn Kitchens/Culinary Medicine Initiative:

Kellyn Kitchens/Culinary Medicine utilizes multiple approaches to engage the community with whole-food plant-forward (WFPF) meals that will satisfy your appetite, taste wonderful and are affordable while also supporting improved health, vitality, and resilience.

Led by two Culinary Institute of America trained chefs, the Kellyn Kitchens team provides culinary medicine training programs, local delivery of Lifestyle Medicine Meals (LMM) to individuals and institutions, WFPF catering to partnering entities, and is in the development stage of a medically tailored

meals initiative. The culinary medicine initiative is a critical and particularly vital component of the overall HNIS.

The objective of the culinary medicine training program is to educate on the benefits of a whole food, plant-forward diet, while providing the excitement of learning new cooking skills and the enjoyment of tasting the prepared food. Sessions are designed to embrace diverse food traditions and cultures. Experiential cooking programs for adults are a critical component of the strategy. Based on Kellyn's experience, a substantial number of individuals and families no longer have the knowledge or perceived time to cook with fresh, whole ingredients; but they are open to trying the food that is prepared in training and are interested in learning the skills to cook healthy, delicious, nutrient-dense meals. These programs are offered in-person at our headquarters, in community settings and with our Intensive Therapeutic Lifestyle Medicine Initiatives.

The delivery of Lifestyle Medicine Meals to our mobile market sites, schools, healthcare providers and individual homes provides an additional way to expand the awareness that whole-food, plant-forward meals can be both delicious and convenient, while reducing the stress of our front-line workers in the schools and hospitals by providing an opportunity to take home already-prepared food for their families.

Kellyn Catering provides both a method to reach additional people, but also to prove that whole-food plant-forward food (WFPF) can and should be available for our social gatherings. One of the pillars of lifestyle medicine is social connection. Social gatherings in restaurants, at individual and business events and in homes are such an important part of life. Including whole-food plant-forward dishes in events is critical in changing the social norm around what we eat at celebrations.

Culinary Medicine is leading Kellyn's initiative into medically tailored meals for patients, helping them change their lifestyle and treat chronic disease with a "Food as Medicine" therapeutic approach.

The Kellyn Lifestyle Medicine Initiative:

Kellyn Lifestyle Medicine is a culmination of all our programming into an intensive therapeutic lifestyle change (ITLC) journey. The initiative provides education, tools and support that allow families, individuals, and employees to reduce chronic disease risk factors with a scientifically proven year-long intervention and support through the adoption of better health habits and appropriate lifestyle modifications. The program covers the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: whole-food plant-forward eating pattern, physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, positive social connections, and avoidance of risky substances.

Each cohort accepts up to thirty households. Historically, approximately ½ of the households attend with a significant other person (spouse, partner, adult child, or friend). The group program is very engaged in the initial three months, meeting for two-hour sessions weekly or bi-weekly during that time. A whole-food, plant-forward meal is provided for each of the sessions as an experiential opportunity to enjoy new recipes and ingredients. The final nine months have in-person meetings quarterly but allow for more frequent one-to-one support conversations with the physician, chef, or other healthy lifestyle educator team members.

The adults in households participating in the Lifestyle Change program have the following data points assessed at baseline: height, weight, BMI, blood pressure, fasting lab work, medical history, mental health/quality of life, lifestyle habits and food frequency questionnaires. Weight, BMI, blood pressure, fasting lab work, mental health/quality of life, lifestyle habits, food frequency questionnaires and

medication changes are recorded at 3 months and 12 months. At six months, the participants' weight, blood pressure and fasting lab work is obtained.

Kellyn is nationally recognized as an early leader in providing ITLC programs to self-insured employers and is one of the pioneers of bringing ITLC programs into underserved neighborhoods.

Summary

The Kellyn co-founders recognized early that Kellyn should not be constrained by the prevailing systemic institutional process but sought to plan, develop and implement its initiatives differently. They chose to build a local physical and community infrastructure to accomplish the initiatives. Engaging with farmers, school districts, cities, neighborhoods, non-profits, healthcare systems and healthcare insurers is a critical component of the HNIS.

Lifestyle, cultural and behavioral change are difficult. It is Kellyn's belief that supportive local relationships and collaborative local initiatives provide the most effective and sustainable opportunity to reverse the current trends in population health. Relationships are the key to shifting social norms and creating healthier communities.

Kellyn is providing and coordinating localized programming and maximizing the efficiencies and impact in one region that can then be replicated by others across the nation: changing the social norms and default choice architecture by making the healthy choice the easy choice, while improving overall economic and population health.

