



These Game-Changing U.S. Hospitals Grow Their Own Produce for Hospital Meals and More

By Courtney Davison
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community. Twice a year, Stony Brook invites local children to the garden to pick their own vegetables and learn about the benefits of healthy eating.

Fresh, healthy food is often an afterthought in the American health care system, but some forward-thinking U.S. hospitals are changing the game with on-site farms that supply produce for patient meals and more.

Here are some inspiring early adopters.

St. Luke's Rodale Institute Organic Farm, Easton, Penn.

When St. Luke's University Health Network decided to develop an organic farm on the acreage surrounding its Anderson Campus, they partnered with the nearby [Rodale Institute](#), a nonprofit that has been at the leading edge of organic agricultural research since the 1940s. Launched in 2014, the [11.5-acre farm yields](#) more than 60,000 pounds of produce each year, which is served at all 10 hospitals in the St. Luke's University Health Network.

Rooftop Farm at Stony Brook University Hospital, Stony Brook, N.Y.

A grant from the New York Department of Health helped Stony Brook University Hospital become one of the [first hospitals with an on-site farm](#) back in 2011. Today the lush-yet-streamlined rooftop garden grows turnips, peppers, [strawberries](#), squash, and other veggies to supplement the 2,000 patient meals the hospital serves daily. Excess produce is donated to people in need in the

Deaver Wellness Farm at Lankenau

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Medical Center, Wynnewood, Penn.

Joining forces with the nonprofit Greener Partners, Lankenau Medical Center, launched its [Deaver Wellness Farm](#) on Earth Day 2016. Featuring a greenhouse, 36 gardens, and a composting space, the farm serves as a hands-on classroom for more than 10,000 children annually, with 90-minute classes on topics such as nutrition, [composting](#), and food justice.

Sky Farm Educational Center At Eskenazi Health, Indianapolis

Open since 2013, the aptly named Sky Farm overlooks downtown Indianapolis from atop [Eskenazi Health's](#) outpatient care center. The 5,000-square-foot urban farm is meticulously managed with the help of volunteers and is open to the public. The farm produces crops year-round, including [lettuce](#), onions, and [broccoli](#), which are harvested and used in free nutrition classes. Sky Farm also grows flowers to make into bouquets for patients.

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Boston Medical Center Rooftop Farm, Boston

Boston Medical Center launched its [rooftop farm](#) in 2017 as part of its Nourishing Our Community initiative. The farm's efficient modular design allows it to yield as much as 3 tons of produce annually—enough food to serve 1,800 meals daily—on less than 3,000 cubic feet of growing space. Veggies and herbs make their way to the cafeteria, inpatient meals, and the Preventive Food Pantry, which offers free produce to low-income patients who present “prescriptions” from their doctors. Produce also stocks an on-site teaching kitchen, which offers patients and local residents free classes in healthy cooking and eating.

Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital Greenhouse, West Bloomfield Township, Mich.

All the meals served at [Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital](#), are made from scratch using fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs grown in the hospital's 1,500-square-foot greenhouse. Adjacent to the greenhouse is an educational center, which is home to cooking classes, a seasonal farmers market, and educational programming for children, which highlights the importance of healthy eating when it comes to preventing many chronic diseases.

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).