



CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement

Closing Shaw's is Bad for Our Health

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) has been working to combat chronic diseases in New Haven – diseases that take a heavy toll on our residents.

The closing of Shaw's Supermarket impacts access to healthy food. Access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables is essential for health. Without a major supermarket, New Haven residents will be left without reliable and affordable healthy food options.

This past summer, CARE mapped six neighborhoods in New Haven, including the West River/Dwight neighborhoods where Shaw's is most easily accessible. CARE took an inventory of places that sell food, including supermarkets, convenience stores, and restaurants. CARE also conducted health surveys with 1205 city residents.

The mapping project revealed that New Haven has an alarming lack of grocery stores and supermarkets. Of the 88 stores CARE mapped, two-thirds were convenience stores (corner stores, bodegas, mini-marts, etc) – stores that mostly sell junk food. One in five stores was a package store. Shaw's is the only major supermarket. Only one store, located in Fair Haven, sold mostly fruits and vegetables. New Haven already lacks access to fresh produce. The closing of Shaw's adds to this void.

Despite overall limited access to healthy food in New Haven, CARE's health surveys indicate that Shaw's enhanced access among nearby residents in the Dwight and West River neighborhoods. Residents in these neighborhoods were more likely to report better access to and quality of fruits and vegetables and that there are stores within easy walking distance of their homes – particularly important for people who do not have cars. CARE surveys suggest that residents in the neighborhood surrounding Shaw's benefited from access to this supermarket.

These results support the importance of sustaining a supermarket in New Haven. Like many urban areas, New Haven can be characterized as a "food desert" where healthy food is non-existent or too expensive – yet there is an abundance of junk food. There is clear consumer demand, and we believe that this translates to considerable economic viability of a supermarket. The health of our children and families depend, in part, on a thriving food environment. CARE has come together with diverse members of our community to demand a new supermarket to replace Shaw's.

**For more information about CARE and this project:
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