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Food Acquisition and Healthcare Options for Individuals with Food Allergies in Mclean County, Illinois

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Oral Presentation O2.1

**FOOD ACQUISITION AND HEALTHCARE OPTIONS FOR
INDIVIDUALS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES IN
MCLEAN COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

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Current research suggests that as many as 4% of all adults and 8% of children in the United States have been diagnosed with a food allergy or intolerance. Due to the the ambiguous nature of many food intolerances and food allergies and the high cost of medical diagnosis, many remain undiagnosed. Many individuals across the United States can not afford the additional cost of seeing an allergist, if there is one in their community. The amount of allergen-free food options at grocery stores is not regulated and less than five allergen-free food pantries exist in the country. These factors speak to how underserved people with food intolerances are in many communities. For this study I surveyed healthcare clinics, food pantries and food banks, and grocery stores in McLean County to determine whether or not they supplied specialized healthcare or food to individuals with food intolerances.