

July 7, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health,
and Human Services
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, House Subcommittee on Labor, Health,
and Human Services
266 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on
Labor, Health, and Human Services
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on
Labor, Health, and Human Services
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Capito, Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member Baldwin, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you work to complete the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we write to respectfully request that the subcommittee provide essential resources and timely instructions to better integrate nutrition into our healthcare system. This letter's 119 signatories represent organizations collectively employing more than 500,000 Americans and totaling more than \$180 billion in annual U.S. revenue and/or budgets.¹ The signatories reflect multiple sectors and types of organizations including academia, agriculture, anti-hunger, consumer advocacy, healthcare system, healthcare professional associations, food is medicine service providers, food production and manufacturing, food retail and food service, life insurance, meal providers, non-profit, nutrition and culinary education providers, pharmacies, public health, research, and technology, and are based or do business in at least 30 U.S. states² and Washington, DC (see appendix of signatories by state).

Poor nutrition is a top driver of diet-related diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and some cancers, and has staggering costs to society. Our country's rates of diet-related chronic diseases are high: Nearly three in four U.S. adults have overweight or obesity and one in two have diabetes or prediabetes. Diet-related diseases are the number one cause of death and disability in the United States. The total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States is \$412.9 billion (\$306.6 billion in direct medical costs plus \$106.3 billion in indirect costs attributable to diabetes). The combined healthcare spending and lost productivity from suboptimal diets costs the economy \$1.1 trillion each year. Diet-related illness also undermines our military readiness; nearly 8 in 10 of young adults ages 17-24 do not qualify for military service, with excess weight as the leading medical disqualifier.

Food is medicine (FIM) interventions reflect the critical link between nutrition and health, integrated into health care delivery. These include programs that provide medically tailored meals, groceries, and produce to support disease management and are linked to the healthcare system as part of a

¹ Data reflecting number of employees and annual revenue and/or budget for listed signatories are not 100% complete as they reflect data retrieved from <https://www.guidestar.org/>, <https://pitchbook.com/>, and individual organizational websites, as available.

² AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NC, NH, NY, OH, PA, SC, TX, VA, WA, WI, and WV

patient's treatment plan. Evidence suggests that medically tailored meals (MTMs) in high-risk, high healthcare-utilization patients can be [cost-saving](#), and produce prescriptions in more general patients with diet-related conditions can be highly [cost-effective](#). Despite this tremendous promise, and while rates of diet-related disease and associated health care spending continue to rise, funding levels for nutrition research and training as a percentage of total NIH spending have been [flat at approximately 5%](#) since FY 2015, and NIH funding for FIM research has remained strikingly low at approximately \$15 million (FY 2023 estimates). Exciting scientific breakthroughs are on the horizon, but robust investment in food is medicine research is critical to allow our nation to pursue exciting new fundamental, clinical, and translational discoveries to address the growing burden of diet-related chronic conditions.

Congress can improve health and manage healthcare costs by directing federal resources to better integrate nutrition into our healthcare system, specifically by advancing food is medicine efforts through the following targeted investments:

1. Programmatic request for the National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director

- ⇒ **Provide a meaningful increase for the NIH Office of the Director** to support fundamental research on food is medicine and launch Food is Medicine Networks or Centers of Excellence.

2. Report Language for the National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director

- a. The committee notes the opportunities to quickly and meaningfully advance research in nutrition and food is medicine along with the need to properly coordinate emerging activities. The Office of the Director shall initiate, in consultation with the Office of Nutrition Research, a Food is Medicine Networks or Centers of Excellence program to advance food is medicine research at NIH. This program will provide the resources needed to effectively operate an NIH-wide entity and fully operationalize the first NIH strategic plan for nutrition research. NIH shall provide a summary of initial activities and plans and needs for subsequent efforts to institute, ramp up, and fully operationalize this program within 180 days of the enactment of this Act.

3. Report Language for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of the Director

- ⇒ **Diet and Chronic Disease Research**

The Committee commends NIH, including the Office of the Director and other Institutes and Centers, for moving ahead with scientific workshops and related activities focused on the role food and diet play in chronic disease among youth and adults. The Committee urges NIH to continue to support these activities across NIH and to consider opportunities to better coordinate ongoing and emerging efforts through a Food is Medicine Networks or Centers of Excellence program.

4. Programmatic request for the Office of the Secretary, General Departmental Management

- ⇒ **Provide a meaningful funding increase for General Departmental Management** to support the Department's ongoing Food is Medicine work with at least \$5 million in resources. We were pleased to see that the administration's FY26 budget highlighted the work of HHS on FIM as an accomplishment, and hope that the new Administration for a Healthy America continues this work.

5. Report language for the Office of the Secretary, General Departmental Management

- ⇒ **With the funding provided for General Departmental Management** at least \$5 million will be used to maintain support for ongoing efforts in the Office of Assistant Secretary for Health for the Food is Medicine: A Project to Unify and Advance Collective Action project to implement a federal strategy to reduce nutrition-related chronic disease, address food insecurity, and improve health outcomes. The Committee encourages HHS to maintain and regularly update the knowledge hub and to collaborate with other federal agencies on best practices, tools, and guidance related to food is medicine interventions, including design, implementation, and evaluation of FIM pilot programs (which include medically tailored meals and medically tailored groceries, which require nutrition education and counseling; as well as Produce Prescriptions and Healthy Food Farmacies which should provide nutrition education and counseling as an option for patients), and assessment of policies that support reimbursement and scaling of FIM interventions in healthcare. The Committee expects the Secretary to coordinate and consult with other federal departments with expertise in nutrition such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Indian Health Service to continue to look towards innovative approaches to improve access to Food is Medicine.

6. Report language for Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary

- ⇒ **Medically Tailored Meals and Produce Prescriptions**
The Committee recognizes the importance of Medically Tailored Meals (MTMs) and Produce Prescriptions and notes recent progress to expand access. MTMs are customized for patients with severe, complex, or chronic conditions based on therapeutic, evidence-based dietary specifications. Patients are identified and referred in partnership with healthcare personnel and meal plans are assigned based on an assessment of the individual's nutritional needs by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. A produce prescription is a medical treatment or preventative service for eligible patients due to diet-related health risks or conditions, food insecurity, or other documented challenges in access to nutritious foods, and is referred by a healthcare provider or health insurance plan. These prescriptions are fulfilled through food retail or delivery and enable patients to access healthy produce with no added sugars or salt, at low or no cost to the patient. The Committee directs the Secretary to look across the Department to identify programs and collaborations that could facilitate coverage for MTMs and Produce Prescriptions and further encourages the Department to work with Congress to expand access and coverage of MTMs and Produce Prescriptions in entities such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and community health centers.

7. Programmatic Request for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

- ⇒ **Food is Medicine for Maternal Health**
The United States continues to experience higher rates of maternal morbidity and mortality relative to other nations. Nutritional insecurity combined with chronic health conditions threatens the health and wellbeing of both mothers and infants. Of the funding provided, the Committee directs HRSA to make at least \$10 million available in grants to community-based health clinics to develop produce prescription and medically tailored meal interventions for maternal populations at risk of poor health outcomes due to nutrition insecurity and other health-related risk factors. These innovative models should serve maternal populations in high-need urban and rural areas and demonstrate improvements in fruit and vegetable intake; household food security; and health outcomes, such as gestational weight gain, overall physical and mental health, and wellbeing for a cohort of pregnant participants, as well as positive birth outcomes.

8. Report language for the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary

⇒ **Nutrition Education for Doctors**

The Committee remains aware that in the United States today, 42% of adults are living with obesity, and 1.5 million Americans die annually from diet-related diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. Despite this prevalence and severity, the average medical school provides limited nutrition education throughout a student's four years in medical school, and nutrition-related competencies are often absent from most medical specialties in graduate medical education. Therefore, the Committee encourages the Department to continue to pursue all opportunities to engage with the medical accrediting bodies such as the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Association of Continuing Medical Education (CME), and state CME organizations, to further incorporate nutrition competencies into their training requirements. The Committee asks HHS to prepare a report about how the Department plans to encourage incorporation of nutrition competencies in medical education and training.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests to better integrate nutrition into healthcare. These sensible, evidence-based strategies can improve the health of the nation, making the country stronger and more competitive and reducing the human and economic burden of chronic disease for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Food is Medicine Institute, Tufts University
Boston, MA

4Roots Foundation, Inc.
Orlando, FL

About Fresh, Inc.
Boston, MA

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Chicago, IL

American College of Lifestyle Medicine
Chesterfield, MO

American Diabetes Association
Arlington, VA

American Public Health Association
Washington, DC

American Society for Nutrition
Rockville, MD

Apples to Zucchini Cooking School
Santa Barbara, CA

Association of State Public Health
Nutritionists
Tucson, AZ

Azuluna
Woodstock, CT

Brightseed, Inc.
South San Francisco, CA

Capital Area Food Bank
Washington, D.C.

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation
of Harvard Law School
Cambridge, MA

Center for Science in the Public Interest
Washington, DC

Ceres Community Project
North San Francisco, CA

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

ChristianaCare
Wilmington, DE

Coalition for Carceral Nutrition
Washington, DC

Community Resource Services
Victoria, VA

Community Servings
Jamaica Plain, MA

Connecticut Food Association
West Harford, CT

DC Greens
Washington, DC

Defeat Malnutrition Today
Washington, DC

Devoted Health, Inc.
Waltham, MA

Dion's Chicago Dream
Chicago, IL

EatLove
San Francisco, CA

EatWell
Brookline, MA

Fair Food Network
Detroit, MI

FamilyCare Health Centers
Scott Depot, WV

FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education)
McLean, VA

Feeding the Carolinas
Clemmons, NC

Florida Health and Nutrition Coalition
West Palm Beach, FL

Food Bank of Central & Eastern North
Carolina
Raleigh, NC

Food Industry Alliance of NYS, Inc.
Albany, NY

Food is Medicine Coalition
Nationwide

Food is Medicine South Carolina
Columbia, SC

FoodMed Certified by Validation Institute
Needham, MA

Fresh Harvest
Clarkston, GA

GA Foods
St. Petersburg, FL

George Washington University Office of
Integrative Medicine & Health
Washington, DC

Global Salmon Initiative
Global

God's Love We Deliver
New York, NY

Green City Growers
Somerville, MA

Growers for Grace PBC
Aiken, SC

Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids
Wilmington, DE

HumanCo
New York, NY

Hunger Free America
New York, NY

Hungry Harvest
Landover, MD

Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force
Boise, ID

Indiana Retail Council
Indianapolis, IN

Instacart
San Francisco, CA

International Fresh Produce Association
Washington, D.C.

Interrupt Hunger
Boerne, TX

January AI
Menlo Park, CA

John Hancock
Boston, MA

Kids in Nutrition (KIN)
Sunnyvale, CA

Live Healthy Spartanburg
Spartanburg, SC

LiveWell Greenville
Greenville, SC

Living Hungry, Inc.
Delray Beach, FL

Lowcountry Food Bank
Charleston, SC

Lowcountry Street Grocery
Charleston, SC

Mass General Brigham
Boston, MA

McCormick Science Institute
Cockeysville, MD

Mealogic Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Meals on Wheels California
San Francisco, CA

Michigan Farmers Market Association
East Lansing, MI

Missouri Retailers Association
Jefferson City, MO

Mother of Fact (NurtureTalk Inc.)
Langdon, NH

National Association of Chain Drug Stores
(NACDS)
Arlington, VA

National Association of Community Health
Centers
Bethesda, MD

National Association of Nutrition and Aging
Services Programs (NANASP)
Washington, DC

National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners
New York, NY

National Produce Prescription Collaborative
Washington, DC

Near North Health
Chicago, IL

Need More Acres Farm
Scottsville, KY

NJOY Health & Nutrition, LLC
St. Petersburg, FL

North American Blueberry Council
Folsom, CA

NourishedRx
Stamford, CT

NYS Food as Medicine Coalition
Albany, NY

Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
Lakeville-Middleboro, MA

Paradise Valley Community College
Phoenix, AZ

Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
Camp Hill, PA

Physicians Committee for Responsible
Medicine
Washington, D.C.

Providence Swedish
Seattle, WA

Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness
and Nutrition
Sacramento, CA

Purfoods, LLC dba Mom's Meals
Ankeny, IA

San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Savor Health
New York, NY

Seafood Nutrition Partnership
Arlington, VA

Season Health
Austin, TX

Share Our Strength
Washington, D.C.

Sifter Solutions
Chicago, IL

Simply Good Foods
Denver, CO

Society of Behavioral Medicine
Milwaukee, WI
SparkWheel
Lawrence, KS

Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
Spartanburg, SC

Step One Foods
Eden Prairie, MN

Teaching Kitchen Collaborative
Burlington, MA

T'ECH DP
New York, NY

Teens for Food Justice
New York, NY

The Community Grocer (TCG Groceries)
Philadelphia, PA

The Greater Boston Food Bank
Boston, MA

The Food Trust,
Philadelphia, PA

The Kroger Co.
Cincinnati, OH

The Round Group
Rockville, MD

THE WELL
New York, NY

Triangle View Tenant Association
Washington, D.C.

Union of Concerned Scientists
Cambridge, MA

United Way of New York City
New York, NY

University of Florida Institute for Food and
Agricultural Sciences
Gainesville, FL

Vetri Community Partnership
Philadelphia, PA

VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center
Richmond, VA

Well Fed
Little Rock, AR

Wholesome Wave
Bridgeport, CT

Wholesome Wave Georgia
Atlanta, GA

Wholespire, Inc.
Columbia, SC

Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and
Agriculture (WANDA)
Washington, D.C.

Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center
New Haven and Derby, CT

APPENDIX: SIGNATORIES BY STATE

Arizona (2)

- Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
- Paradise Valley Community College

Arkansas (1)

- Well Fed

California (10)

- Apples to Zucchini Cooking School
- Brightseed, Inc.
- Ceres Community Project
- EatLove
- Instacart
- January AI
- Kids in Nutrition (KIN)
- Meals on Wheels California
- Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness and Nutrition
- San Diego State University

Colorado (2)

- North American Blueberry Council
- Simply Good Foods

Connecticut (5)

- Azuluna
- Connecticut Food Association
- NourishedRx
- Wholesome Wave
- Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

Delaware (2)

- ChristianaCare
- Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids

Florida (6)

- 4Roots Foundation, Inc.
- Florida Health and Nutrition Coalition
- GA Foods
- Living Hungry, Inc.
- NJOY Health & Nutrition, LLC
- University of Florida Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences

Georgia (2)

- Fresh Harvest
- Wholesome Wave Georgia

APPENDIX: SIGNATORIES BY STATE

Idaho (1)

- Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force

Illinois (4)

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Dion's Chicago Dream
- Near North Health
- Sifter Solutions

Indiana (1)

- Indiana Retail Council

Iowa (1)

- Purfoods, LLC dba Mom's Meals

Kansas (1)

- SparkWheel

Kentucky (1)

- Need More Acres Farm

Massachusetts (14)

- About Fresh, Inc.
- Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School
- Community Servings
- Devoted Health, Inc.
- EatWell
- Food is Medicine Institute, Tufts University
- FoodMed Certified by Validation Institute
- Green City Growers
- John Hancock
- Mass General Brigham
- Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
- Teaching Kitchen Collaborative
- The Greater Boston Food Bank
- Union of Concerned Scientists

Maryland (5)

- American Society for Nutrition
- Hungry Harvest
- McCormick Science Institute
- National Association of Community Health Centers
- The Round Group

Michigan (2)

- Fair Food Network
- Michigan Farmers Market Association

APPENDIX: SIGNATORIES BY STATE

Minnesota (1)

- Step One Foods

Missouri (2)

- American College of Lifestyle Medicine
- Missouri Retailers Association

New Hampshire (1)

- Mother of Fact (NurtureTalk Inc.)

New York (11)

- Food Industry Alliance of NYS, Inc.
- God's Love We Deliver
- HumanCo
- Hunger Free America
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- Savor Health
- TECH DP
- Teens for Food Justice
- THE WELL
- NYS Food as Medicine Coalition
- United Way of New York City

North Carolina (2)

- Feeding the Carolinas
- Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

Ohio (1)

- The Kroger Co.

Pennsylvania (5)

- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association
- The Food Trust
- The Community Grocer (TCG Groceries)
- Vetri Community Partnership

South Carolina (8)

- Food is Medicine South Carolina
- Growers for Grace PBC
- LiveWell Greenville
- Live Healthy Spartanburg
- Lowcountry Food Bank
- Lowcountry Street Grocery
- Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
- Wholespire, Inc.

APPENDIX: SIGNATORIES BY STATE

Texas (2)

- Interrupt Hunger
- Season Health

Virginia (6)

- American Diabetes Association
- Community Resource Services
- FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education)
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
- Seafood Nutrition Partnership
- VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center

Washington (1)

- Providence Swedish

West Virginia (1)

- FamilyCare Health Centers

Wisconsin (1)

- Society of Behavioral Medicine

Washington, D.C. (15)

- American Public Health Association
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Coalition for Carceral Nutrition
- DC Greens
- Defeat Malnutrition Today
- George Washington University Office of Integrative Medicine & Health
- International Fresh Produce Association
- Mealogic Inc.
- National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
- National Produce Prescription Collaborative
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine
- Share Our Strength
- Triangle View Tenant Association
- Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture (WANDA)

Global (1)

- Global Salmon Initiative

Nationwide (1)

- Food is Medicine Coalition