



Biden-Harris Transition Team
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

December 18, 2020

Dear President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris,

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP) and Hunger Free America (HFA), we would like to congratulate you on your election victory.

We are writing to urge you to announce and implement a detailed plan to end hunger among children and older Americans by 2024 and all domestic hunger by 2028 as part of the first-ever comprehensive, federal government-wide, strategy on food issues. Social determinants of health, like access to nutritious food, can have a short- and long-term impact on health and embracing a "health in all policies" agenda is essential in ameliorating the negative health outcomes associated with food insecurity and malnutrition.

As organizations representing physicians and hunger advocates, we can attest to the urgent need to end U.S. hunger and ensure good nutrition for all as part of a comprehensive approach to improving the health and well-being of all Americans. Hunger and poor nutrition are some of the leading contributors to premature death in the U.S. and particularly impact low-income Americans and people of color. Food insecurity is associated with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, chronic kidney disease, and depression and costs the American health care system upwards of \$53 billion per year (1). The effects of hunger and poor nutrition have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As food insecurity compromises immune systems and increases comorbidities, Americans who are malnourished are more susceptible to contracting and dying from COVID-19. **Addressing social determinants of health by eliminating food insecurity and improving nutrition for all Americans is crucial to overcoming the current pandemic and increasing the long-term life expectancy of Americans, while also decreasing overall health care spending.**

To address these concerns, we respectfully request that your incoming administration promptly take the following steps:

- Create a White House Office of Food Security and Nutrition, under the White House Domestic Policy Council, to coordinate government-wide anti-hunger, food systems, and nutrition improvement work. This office should also coordinate the work of a

(1) https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2019/18_0549.htm

government-wide Food Security and Nutrition Task Force including representatives of all relevant federal agencies.

- Support measures to remove enrollment barriers, streamline and simplify application processes, and improve access to anti-poverty, health care, nutrition, housing, employment, and other support programs.
- Work with Congress to pass legislation to increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by replacing the “thrifty” food plan with the “low cost” food plan in order to ensure families can afford adequate healthful food for the entire month.
- Direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture to expand and improve online SNAP ordering to better allow all SNAP recipients in all locations to use their benefits online to order groceries (including from corner stores and farmers’ markets) and get groceries delivered to their homes.
- Ensure sufficient federal funding for programs that provide pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school students nationwide with free, tasty, and nutritious breakfasts, lunches, afterschool suppers, and summer meals—locally and regionally sourced and sustainably produced whenever possible.
- Launch a “moonshot on nutrition research” to intensify and improve coordination of nutrition research in order to help the nation better understand how to reduce the breadth, severity, and cost of diet-related diseases.

Taken together, these steps would dramatically reduce hunger, improve nutrition, and decrease the incidence of diet-related illness nationwide. We couldn’t agree more with President-Elect Biden’s recent statement: *“Hunger today isn’t about scarcity — it’s about a massive failure in leadership.”*

We look forward to the new administration rectifying this recent failure by taking every step possible to make America hunger free.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

American College of Physicians
Hunger Free America