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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Newly Released Report Recommends Pathways to Address Food Access and Nutrition in Medicaid Programs

Webinar Set for January 21 to Showcase Report Findings/Strategies

JANUARY 5, 2022 (WASHINGTON, DC) – Understanding that access to affordable, healthy food is fundamental to the population’s health and wellbeing; and without such access, individuals face greater risk of disease and increased health care costs, experts from three leading organizations came together to offer key strategies to address the challenges to food access and good nutrition in a special report released today.

The 28-page report, [*Addressing Nutrition and Food Access in Medicaid*](#), is a collaborative effort from [The Food Trust](#), [Population Health Alliance](#) (PHA), and the [Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School](#) (CHLPI). The newly released report highlights opportunities for food access organizations, health care payers, and policymakers to leverage funding from state Medicaid programs to improve access to nutrition interventions in health care settings.

Food insecurity and poor diet are associated with a range of negative health outcomes, with poor diet as the [leading risk factor](#) for death in the United States. Like many other issues in the United States due to systemic inequities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and diet-related disease. Integrating food access and nutrition services into health care delivery and financing is an important part of the solution.

“As community-based organizations work to connect more individuals with programs that improve well-being and prevent diet-related disease, partnerships with healthcare institutions are essential,” says Mark Edwards, President & CEO of The Food Trust. “By working together, we can ensure that all Americans are empowered to use food as medicine.”

“The Population Health Alliance remains committed to addressing social determinants of health and health inequities. Sourcing adequate nutrition in particular is critical for health and is often lacking in communities under economic stress,” explains John Haughton, MD, MS, Chair of PHA’s Quality and Research Committee, which spearheaded the effort for the multi-stakeholder professional and trade association solely focused on population health management. “Solving how to ensure reliable access to

food in your community and at scale can be challenging. Our collective newly released work offers specific actions that can be taken to increase food availability and demonstrates how these actions fit within broader Medicaid funding and policy frameworks for the betterment of individuals and communities at large.”

“More and more Medicaid providers and insurers are acknowledging the incredible value of food and nutrition services for their patients,” said Katie Garfield, Clinical Instructor for the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation. “When it comes to making these services available to Medicaid beneficiaries, many are investing heavily and seeking new strategies to complement their existing efforts. Our report unearths several funding and partnership opportunities stakeholders can leverage now and advocate for in the future to establish programming.”

The report discusses the benefits and limitations of four potential pathways to support nutrition and healthy food access in Medicaid: (1) state plan coverage; (2) public and private grants/pilots; (3) Medicaid Managed Care; and (4) Medicaid waivers. In addition, the authors outline key considerations that food access organizations, plans, and policymakers must keep in mind as they navigate new payment opportunities and establish community-clinical partnerships.

The report was developed with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and is [available here for download](#). Additionally, the organizations will host a free [webinar](#) to discuss Medicaid funding for food and nutrition services on Friday, January 21 at 1:00pm ET. Registration and details are available here: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_vjkfetAEQemd6_8w5LdJXw.

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ABOUT PHA

Established in 1998, Population Health Alliance (PHA) is the industry’s only multi-stakeholder professional and trade association solely focused on population health management, representing stakeholders (e.g., health systems, health plans, employer solutions, academia, biopharma and technology companies) from across the health care ecosystem that seek to improve health outcomes optimize the consumer and provider experience and drive affordability. www.populationhealthalliance.org | [@PHAVoice](#)

ABOUT THE FOOD TRUST

The Food Trust is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that works with supermarkets, policymakers and other stakeholders on a comprehensive approach that increases the availability and affordability of healthy food. To learn more, visit thefoodtrust.org.

ABOUT CHLPI

The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI) advocates for legal, regulatory, and policy reforms in health and food systems, with a focus on the health, public health, and food needs of systemically marginalized individuals. CHLPI’s broad range of initiatives aim to expand access to high-quality health care and nutritious, affordable food; to reduce health- and food-related disparities; to develop community advocacy capacity; and, to promote more equitable, sustainable, and effective health care and food systems. To learn more, visit: <https://chlpi.org>.