

## A Call to Action: Researching the Impact of Medicaid Policies on Nutrition Insecurity

**Background:** Medicaid agencies are increasingly developing strategies to address food needs among the over 85 million Medicaid enrollees across the country. These strategies present a unique opportunity to advance nutrition security and equity, as Medicaid enrollees who represent a disproportionate percent of people of color in the United States. Share our Strength, HealthBegins and Benefit Data Trust created the Medicaid Food Security Network, a national coalition of anti-hunger and healthcare stakeholders to help states adopt and successfully implement Medicaid food strategies.

**Methods:** To support this Network, we developed a coding instrument and process to analyze states' Medicaid policy documents, including 1115 waivers, managed care contracts and quality improvement plans between 2022 and 2023. Documents were coded for six key policy themes that were identified through a consensus process among the researchers and their collaborators. The six themes were: 1) food insecurity screening and referral, 2) care navigation 3) data, evaluation and continuous improvement 4) aligned SNAP & WIC enrollment infrastructure 5) Medicaid managed care procurement and 6) direct investments.

**Results:** The results of this analysis are presented on the Medicaid Food Security Network Policy Dashboard (<https://medicaidfoodsecuritynetwork.org/dashboard/>) where users can filter by policy strategy and navigate to individual policy summaries. This analysis demonstrates a high degree of variability across even similar state policies. For example, screening policies range from an added question to a Health Risk Assessment with no monitoring or accountability to a robust program with data exchange, financial incentives and connections to a health equity strategy.

**Conclusions:** The variation across states and between state policies and the current body of evidence means that the impact of these interventions may be unknown. Failure to research their impact may mean missed opportunities to improve outcomes for specific populations, including people of color. This presentation will guide attendees through the Medicaid Policy Dashboard, highlight key trends and examples, and detail specific areas where additional study is needed and where states may have the requisite data.