



The Honorable Congressman Jim McGovern  
370 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McGovern,

March 16, 2022

Congratulations on the funding commitment for the White House conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger and Health. We applaud your dedication to Ending Hunger and look forward to supporting your continued efforts to make this conference a success.

I am pleased to share insights from our work at Community Care Cooperative (C3) to address food insecurity. C3 is the largest of the MassHealth Accountable Care Organizations, representing 19 Federally Qualified Health Centers and Affiliated Provider Practices across the state, including two health centers in your District in Worcester

We know that addressing social health is a vital part of providing whole-person primary care. So we were thrilled when MassHealth gave us the opportunity to launch the Flexible Services program in 2020. This program has provided us funding and a pathway to create partnerships and interventions to address the Nutrition and Housing needs of our members.

In the two years since we launched Flexible Services, we have grown our program to engage 21 incredible social service partners, with innovative Food Is Medicine and Housing programs across Massachusetts. Our two largest partners include Project Bread and Community Servings.

To date, we have connected more than 6,300 members – those living with complex health conditions - into our Nutrition programs. We are working at the top of the “Food Is Medicine Pyramid” to tailor these programs to our members’ unique health needs.

And we’re having incredible success:

- More than 90% of those referrals are successfully connected to services – that’s a level of connection that far surpasses other programs of this kind around the country, thanks to our dedicated staff on both sides of the referral, and our technology that facilitates closing the loop on those referrals.
- Our approach assures that members receive personal case management, with goods and supports that address their specific household food needs and help them put healthy food on the table.

- We've provided 130,000 medically tailored meals, \$2.7 million in food purchasing power, over one thousand hours of nutrition education, and supported 2,500 households with kitchen items to cook healthier meals.

Our preliminary data shows this program is having an impact.

- Our health center staff report that by addressing members' food insecurity needs, they are better able to engage members in care, including longer participation in care management programs that facilitate improvements in health behaviors and medication adherence to manage chronic disease,
- We're seeing improvements in food security rates with 25% of members reporting being fully food secure after six months in the program,
- Members tell us that they feel the program is helping them, with more than 96% of members reporting that the program has improved their health condition.
- And our preliminary analysis shows reduction in Emergency Department utilization, fewer inpatient hospitalizations, and a reduction in overall cost of care.

#### **Our Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: We encourage other states to adopt this model through 1115 Waivers and other opportunities for innovation within Medicaid and Medicare.** At C3, we are demonstrating the power of clinical – community partnerships. We think that these linkages between health centers and the social service sector are the way to truly incorporate Food Is Medicine programs into primary care and end hunger in America.

**Recommendation 2: Increase SNAP benefits to assure that families can afford to put healthy food on the table.** While we are thrilled with the success of our Flexible Services program, we cannot afford to address household food insecurity through Medicaid. It is vital that SNAP benefits are increased in the next Farm Bill. By assuring that the hunger safety net is sufficient, programs like ours at Community Care Cooperative can be dedicated to addressing the medically-tailored food and nutrition needs of our members with complex health conditions.

We thank you for your dedication to this important work and stand ready to assist your team with the White House conference on Food, Nutrition, Health & Hunger in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Christina Severin

President & CEO Community Care Cooperative