

SNEB | 3502 Woodview Trace, Suite 300 | Indianapolis, IN 46268
P: 317-328-4627 | F: 317-280-8527 | www.sneb.org | info@sneb.org

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) represents approximately 1,000 nutrition educators worldwide. SNEB is dedicated to promoting effective nutrition education and healthy behavior through research, policy, and practice, and has a vision of healthy communities, food systems, and behaviors.

SNEB urges the House and Senate to fully fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as part of Title IV: Nutrition of the Farm Bill. SNEB supports maintaining SNAP's Thrifty Food Plan benefit adjustments and continuing to allow SNAP participants to choose purchased foods that support individual ethnic, cultural, taste, and health needs. SNEB also urges Congress to strengthen assistance programs, including The Emergency Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

SNAP remains the most equitable means of accessing food for vulnerable populations that experience food insecurity in the United States¹. A recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report stated that 79% of households receiving SNAP contained either a child <18 years, an individual >60 years, or an individual with a disability and that overall, 40% of SNAP participants were children. Seventy-five percent of households that participate in SNAP had incomes below the federal poverty level, while average monthly benefits were a modest \$297. When households living in poverty received both SNAP and SNAP emergency allotments, the proportion of households living in poverty decreased by 30%².

It is well established that food insecurity has negative impacts on health at all ages³. Alternatively, when low-income individuals have access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food, there are positive effects on health. For example, children and adolescents who participate in SNAP have a lower risk of developing metabolic syndrome, a condition leading to cardiovascular disease⁴. Adults who participate in SNAP experience better management of high blood pressure and have lower rates of death from all causes^{5,6}. SNAP participation is also associated with lower healthcare costs, potentially saving government health insurance programs valuable dollars that could later be applied to nutrition education programs such as SNAP-Ed, which provides instruction on healthy eating for SNAP participants in all 50 states and their local communities^{7,8,9}.

SNEB applauds the past bipartisan efforts of the House and Senate to create a Farm Bill that has improved the lives of SNAP participants. We urge Congress to return to this core principle and advance a fully funded, equitable Farm Bill that protects and strengthens SNAP and the assistance programs that support millions of households in the United States.

Sincerely,

¹ Samuel LJ, Crews DC, Swenor BK, et al. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Access and Racial Disparities in Food Insecurity. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023;6(6):e2320196. Published 2023 Jun 1. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.20196U.S.

² Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2022, by Mia Monkovic. Project Officer, Aja Weston. Alexandria, VA, 2024. Available online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis>

³ Gundersen C, Ziliak JP. Food Insecurity And Health Outcomes. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2015 Nov;34(11):1830-9. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0645. PMID: 26526240.

⁴ Alfaro-Hudak KM, Schulkind L, Racine EF, Zillante A. SNAP and Cardiometabolic Risk in Youth. *Nutrients*. 2022; 14(13):2756. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14132756>

⁵ Ojinnaka CO, Arteaga I, Hodges L, Heflin C. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Medication Adherence Among Medicaid-Insured Older Adults Living with Hypertension. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2023;38(6):1349-1356. doi:10.1007/s11606-022-07994-4

⁶ Heflin CM, Ingram SJ, Ziliak JP. The Effect Of The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program On Mortality. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2019;38(11):1807-1815. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00405

⁷ Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Rigdon J, Meigs JB, Basu S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation and Health Care Expenditures Among Low-Income Adults. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2017;177(11):1642-1649. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.4841

⁸ Dillman L, Eichner J, Humienny A, et al. The Impact of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Enrollment on Health and Cost Outcomes. *NEJM Catal Innov Care Deliv* 2023;4(6). DOI: 10.1056/CAT.22.0366

⁹ SNAP-Ed Connection. US Department of Agriculture. Accessed July 5, 2024. Available at <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/>.