

# The Power of Food as Medicine: What Health Care is Doing and What is Working

Food as medicine is more than a catch phrase. Nutritious food has always had the proven power to heal. With food and health inequities, and rising cases of chronic conditions, the costs are skyrocketing. Not just from a monetary standpoint such as health care costs, but also the quality of life.

## DIET-RELATED DISEASES are costing Americans in lives and dollars.

**46%**  
HIGHER

The general mortality rate for food-insecure people was 46% higher than for those with a sufficient diet<sup>1</sup>



One of the main lifestyle risk factors for chronic conditions is poor nutrition<sup>2</sup>



85% of older adults have at least one chronic health condition<sup>3</sup>



90% of the nation's \$4.1 trillion in annual health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions<sup>4</sup>

## QUALITY NUTRITION is part of an important partnership in health care.

The emphasis should not be on diet or medicine alone, but rather on diet and medicine.<sup>5</sup>



Total health care expenditures paid by food-insecure families compared to food-secure families<sup>6</sup>



People with chronic conditions who receive home-delivered meals experience fewer hospitalizations, and when hospitalized, their length of stay is significantly shorter<sup>7</sup>



**\$13.6B**  
SAVINGS

Possible payer savings with medically tailored meals for patients and could help avert 1.6 million hospitalizations annually<sup>8</sup>

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES are taking notice and action.

The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health in 2022, focused on bringing policymakers, public and private sector organizations, and other food equity advocates together to not only end hunger, but also reduce the burden of diet-related disease.



Policymakers and legislators are advocating food as medicine programs on local, state and federal levels



Private organizations are committing grant money to nutrition programs



Growing number of health insurers are incorporating quality nutrition into in their plans

Let's work together to better integrate the food as medicine concept into services and benefits for better outcomes and lowering health care costs for all.

### Catherine Macpherson MS, RDN

Senior Vice President  
Healthcare Strategy and Chief Nutrition Officer  
catherine.macpherson@momsmeals.com  
844.280.2134

momsmeals.com | 866.716.3257

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### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thenationshealth.org/content/50/8/E32%20>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/talking-your-older-patients>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m2482>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.00414>

<sup>7</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2150131913490737>

<sup>8</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2797397>