

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Susan Rice  
Ambassador  
Director of the Domestic Policy Council  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ambassador Rice,

We look forward to the upcoming White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health and appreciate the opportunity to share input on topics to address. As you develop the Administration's goals for the Conference, we urge you to consider the important role that Food is Medicine interventions play in addressing hunger, nutrition, and health and advance strategies to integrate them across the federal government.

Food is Medicine seeks to strengthen the role of food access and nutrition in maintaining good health and preventing disease. Poor diets are a leading contributor to the development of chronic illness, often with a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged and rural communities. Numerous studies have shown that interventions to improve access and affordability of healthy, nutritious foods are effective, improving health outcomes and lowering health care spending.

A broad coalition of stakeholders comprised of health care providers and payers, food retailers, foundations and community-based organizations have developed a wide range of programs advancing the idea of Food is Medicine, from medically tailored meals to produce prescription programs. As Members of Congress, we strongly support expanding access to these models to allow more Americans to benefit.

Medically tailored meals, for example, can be customized by medical providers to meet the needs of a patient based on their condition and have been shown to reduce inpatient hospital admissions and emergency department visits. H.R. 5370, the Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Demonstration Pilot Act, would establish a Medicare demonstration program to improve access for beneficiaries and further show the value of the service. With more than half of U.S. adults over 65 suffering from one or more chronic conditions, advancing this legislation and similar efforts would have a major impact for vulnerable populations.

Produce prescriptions provide low-cost or free access to fruits and vegetables for Americans experiencing food insecurity or diet-related health risks. The 2018 Farm Bill established a Produce Prescription Program under the Nutrition Incentive Program at USDA, which supports community partners in demonstrating and evaluating the impact of these programs. Recent appropriations bills have further expanded these efforts, including pilot programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Indian Health Service.

This Conference, the first of its kind in over 50 years, represents a significant opportunity to spur whole-government action, engage with partners across the country, and ensure that all Americans have reliable access to healthy food. We urge you to incorporate food is medicine into the White House's platform for the Conference. We appreciate your leadership as we strive to enact policies that will end hunger and improve both nutrition and health across the nation.

Sincerely,



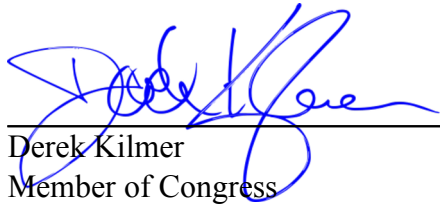
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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary Xavier Becerra, Department of Health and Human Services  
Secretary Tom Vilsack, Department of Agriculture