



# Food Insecurity : Impacts on Patient Health

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Humana.com/BoldGoal  
<http://populationhealth.humana.com/#toolkits>  
#MoreHealthyDays

Humana.

# Food Insecurity Training Objectives

- 01 | Understand what it is and how it impacts patient health
- 02 | What your peers are saying about it
- 03 | Learn a simple way to screen for food insecurity
- 04 | Have available resources and how to access them to give to your patients



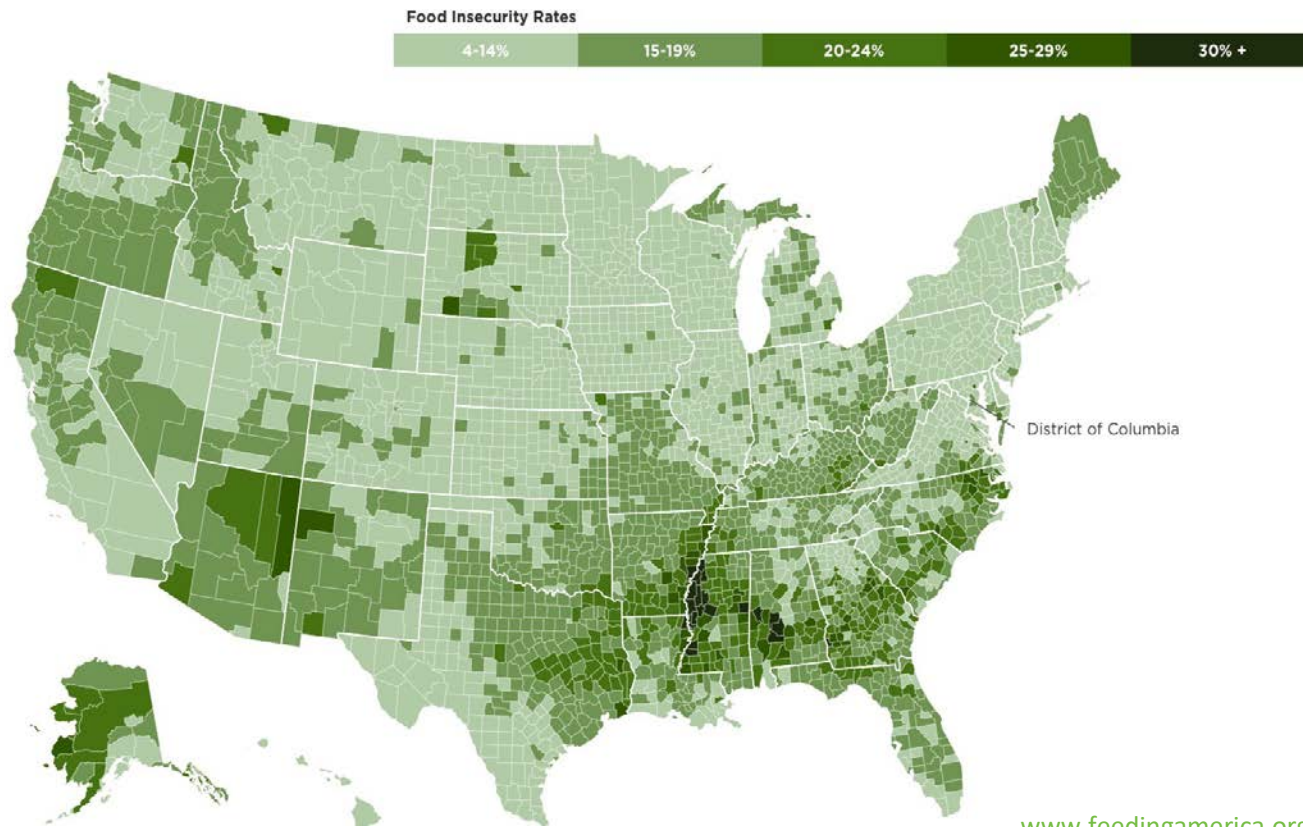
# What is food insecurity?

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- **Defined:** The lack of access to enough food for a healthy, active life
- **Prevalence:** 1 in 8 (12.9 percent) Americans – 41 million people
  - Includes 4.9 million seniors (60+)
- **What you may hear from your patient:**
  - “I can’t afford [healthy food, my medication, my bills, etc.]”
  - “I don’t always eat because I need to feed my kids.”
  - “I’m worried my [electricity, gas, phone, internet, etc.] will be shut off this month.”



# Food insecurity plagues EVERY community







## Food insecurity harms health

**Greater disease risk:** Food insecure patients are more likely to develop chronic conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

**Problems with care management:** Food and medication trade-offs and infrequent access to healthy food make managing a chronic disease more difficult.


**Increased cost:** More chronic conditions, more hospitalizations and readmissions, and lower medication adherence result in higher costs.


Each food-insecure patient costs the health care system \$1,863 more per year, totaling **\$77.5 billion in additional health care costs per year.**

# Our pilot showed much higher rates

 **Four**  
weeks in Broward  
Continucare clinics

 **530**  
patients screened  
for food insecurity

 **46%**  
of patients screened  
positive (vs. 15%\*)

 **nearly 2x**  
more unhealthy  
days (27.0 vs. 14.2)

**51 percent**  
of Humana-covered  
patients screened  
positive

**73 percent**  
of Humana-covered  
Medicaid patients  
screened positive

**80 percent**  
of Humana-covered  
dual-eligible patients  
screened positive

\*15% of Broward County residents are food insecure (<http://map.feedingamerica.org>)

Source: Measuring food insecurity and healthy days in a primary care setting (2016). McGrath, E., Renda, A., Eaker, E., et al. [http://research.humana.com/wpcontent/uploads/2017/05/Humana\\_Research\\_Measuring\\_Food\\_Insecurity.pdf](http://research.humana.com/wpcontent/uploads/2017/05/Humana_Research_Measuring_Food_Insecurity.pdf)



## What physicians are seeing and saying

***“Social determinants impact patient health more than we can imagine. I had a diabetic patient whose sugar levels were under control at times, then uncontrolled at the next visit. After months of assessing, I learned that she was managing her sugars mid-month because that’s when she got paid and could afford to buy healthy food. Once her money ran out, she relied on food pantries and neighbors, and was eating more processed foods rather than fresh, healthy options. So her sugars would go off the chart by the end of the month.”***

**Sarah Moyer, MD | Director**  
Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness

# A simple way to find out if your patient is food insecure

Use a validated two-question screener (below) from Hunger Vital Sign™, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food security screening survey. An affirmative response to either or both questions should trigger a food support referral.

**1** Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

*Was that **often, sometimes** or **never** true for you?*

**2** Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.

*Was that **often, sometimes** or **never** true for you?*







## Considerations when screening for food insecurity

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Patients may not want to talk about food insecurity because they are:

- Embarrassed
- Worried about judgment
- Worried that they can't get any help
- Worried about social services involvement

# How to talk to your patients about food insecurity

1. Acknowledge the problem
2. Discuss the importance of food to their health
3. Refer them to available resources

## Sample script

*That must be very difficult. I'm glad you shared this with me because the kinds of foods you eat are really important for your health.*

*I'd like to connect you to the local food bank in your area. It can help connect you to available food assistance programs, such as food pantries near your home and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is often called SNAP.*

*I can provide you with the phone number and connect you, if you are interested.*





## What resources can help?

Local food pantries

Food assistance programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC)\*

USDA senior commodities program\*

School meals and summer meals programs\*

*\* for those who qualify*

# How to connect patients to local resources

[http://www.feedingamerica.org/  
find-your-local-foodbank/](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank/)

Enter the patient's  
ZIP code and press  
"GO"



Receive contact  
information for the  
local food bank



The screenshot shows the Feeding America website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Feeding America logo, a search bar, and links for 'Need Help', 'Sign Up', and 'DONATE'. Below the navigation bar are five menu items: 'HUNGER IN AMERICA', 'OUR WORK', 'TAKE ACTION', 'FIND A FOOD BANK', and 'HUNGER BLOG'. The main content area features a search box with the text 'Search by Zip Code or State'. The ZIP code '40202' is entered in the first field, and the 'GO' button is highlighted. Below the search box, there is a link to 'View Feeding America's full Member Food Bank Network'. The search results show '1 Feeding America Food Bank that serves 40202'. The text below the results states: 'Feeding America food banks serve large areas and will be able to find a feeding program in your local community.' The results list the 'Dare to Care Food Bank' with the following information: '5803 Fern Valley Road', 'PO Box 35458', 'Louisville, KY 40232', '502.966.3821', and the website 'www.daretocare.org'. At the bottom of the results, there are two buttons: 'FIND FOOD' and 'VOLUNTEER'. To the right of the search results is a map showing the location of the Dare to Care Food Bank in Louisville, KY, with a red pin on Fern Valley Rd. The map includes street names like Rangeland Rd, Fern Valley Rd, and Whispering Hills Blvd, and landmarks like Clearwater Farm Apartments and Jefferson Mall. The map data is attributed to Google, 2018.