



American
Heart

September 21, 2019

SNAP Program Design Branch
Program Development Division
Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Re:

For more than 50 years, SNAP has been vital in addressing food insecurity in the United States. SNAP has a positive impact on health, educational attainment, and economic self-sufficiency;¹ indeed, food insecurity costs the United States \$178

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provide nutrition support for a targeted population at a critical time of growth and development. Congress has allowed for SNAP, Medicaid, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participation to reduce the administrative process when certifying individuals for WIC. Subsequently, nearly 75 percent of WIC participants are able to waive certification requirements as a result of their participation in another federal program. Changing SNAP eligibility could mean a delay in access to or a decline in participation of WIC. In addition, cutting access to SNAP – and subsequently WIC – can cost more in health care spending: for every dollar spent on WIC, Medicaid cost savings for the first 60 days after birth range from \$1.77 to \$3.13 for newborns and mothers combined, and \$2.84 to \$3.90 for newborns alone.¹⁹ A drop in WIC participation can lead to higher Medicaid spending.

One in three children who attend schools on military bases that are run by the DoDEA are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. A change to SNAP eligibility for these families means that more than 6,500 children could be in danger of losing access to healthy meals at school.²⁰ Cutting access to SNAP and meals served at DoDEA schools could have a devastating impact on military families facing financial challenges.

In closing, we urge USDA to withdraw the proposed rule on Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). By making it more difficult to access SNAP benefits, the proposed rule could increase the number of people who are food insecure and adversely affect health outcomes – particularly for children who would be affected not just through SNAP, but school meals, WIC, and DoDEA as well.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Kristy Anderson, Senior Government Relations Advisor at (202) 785-7927 or kristy.anderson@heart.org.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Harrington, M.D., FAHA
President
American Heart Association
