

Come to the Table: Bringing Healthcare and Nutrition Together

Weeks ago, partners gathered at the [White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#) to forge a future without hunger, diet-related diseases, and health disparities. Building on the momentum, USDA recently hosted Come to the Table: USDA's National [Nutrition Security](#) and Healthcare Summit. More than 200 healthcare, federal, and community leaders came together to advance the conference goals of ensuring all Americans have the resources necessary to eat nutritious foods that support good health.

This complex challenge intersects with many other issues that our country faces. Systemic racism, lack of affordable housing, and climate change all impact our fight to end food insecurity. But despite the daunting size of this challenge, it is one that we cannot afford to ignore. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in his opening remarks, "Hunger and diet-related diseases have significant impacts," especially on underserved communities, but both are "almost entirely preventable."

USDA is not in this battle alone. The White House Conference highlighted the innovations of many organizations working toward the goal of increasing access to healthy food for all.

We heard much about some of this great work at USDA's event. For example, health care organizations at the summit reported that they continue to conduct food insecurity screenings for their patients and provide referrals to programs like [SNAP](#) and [WIC](#). Children's National Hospital shared plans to establish a diabetes food pharmacy and eventually expand the program to other departments, and Cleveland Clinic operates a SNAP-authorized farmers market onsite to serve staff, patients' families, and the local community.

Working together, we can maximize existing initiatives and create even stronger, wider-reaching solutions that will be sustainable over time.

Rep. Jim McGovern challenged attendees to act now, emphasizing, "We don't need to reinvent the wheel; we need to put solutions into action." At USDA, we are committed to [putting solutions into action](#) (PDF, 10.0 MB), but we know that we can't do it without partnerships from the organizations working closely with the American people. It is going to take an enduring spirit of collaboration to solve one of the most pressing issues of our times. As Food and Nutrition Service Administrator Cindy Long said, "We know that we're only one piece of a bigger picture."

Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Stacy Dean shared that Come to the Table would be the first of many summits, stating, "We're looking to replicate this all across the country." As we do, USDA will work with our partners to "invite folks to the table that haven't historically been there," as Chief Operating Officer of Acenda Integrated Health Melissa Fox urged fellow attendees. Because, in the closing words of Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, "It's up to us... to give everyone a chance."

Click [here](#) for photos from the summit.