**THE BACKGROUND:**

The Food Is Medicine Coalition is a national coalition of nonprofits focused on the intersection of nutrition and healthcare, delivering medically tailored meals (MTMs) and medically tailored groceries, nutrition counseling and education, and medical nutrition therapy to people in communities across the country living with severe, chronic and diet-related illnesses.

*Where we started:* Most FIMC agencies began over 35 years ago serving people living with HIV at the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and have since expanded their mission to serve all people living with severe illnesses.

*Where we are now:* In 2022, FIMC MTM organizations in 25 states provided over 12.3 million meals to chronically ill people in their homes and communities. Despite this progress, there is no dedicated federal funding to support access to MTMs.

**Medically tailored meal organizations have a unique role in the health care system.**

**MTMs are:**
- Cooked from scratch and delivered to the homes of individuals living with severe illness
- Provided after the recipient is referred by a medical professional or health plan
- Tailored to the medical needs of the recipient by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)
- Designed to improve health outcomes, lower cost of care, and increase patient satisfaction.

**THE IMPACT:**

Medically tailored meals are an American success story. But there is so much more that federal policymakers can do.

**Federal policy changes can:**
- Build on the work that FIMC agencies have done
- Lower health care costs
- Reduce inpatient hospital admissions and emergency room visits
- Improve health outcomes among MTM recipients

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The Food is Medicine Coalition (FIMC) is a coalition of 35 nonprofit medically tailored food and nutrition service providers throughout the U.S. focused on advancing policy, research and best practices around evidence-informed medical food and nutrition interventions. Visit fimcoalition.org to learn more.
What you need to know about FIMC's 2023 Federal Policy Agenda

**MTM FEDERAL FUNDING**

There is currently no dedicated federal funding to support the cost of preparing and distributing medically tailored meals to chronically ill Americans who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves.

**What's happening now:**

MTM organizations rely primarily on the goodwill of volunteers and private donations for the majority of their funding. Because of the compelling research results, some individual states and Medicaid and Medicare managed care plans have begun to use waivers and regulatory flexibilities to pilot coverage of MTMs.

**Why federal funding matters:**

While much success has been seen in these pilots they remain on the margins of innovation and fall short of establishing the widespread coverage needed to ensure equitable access to these critical services across the U.S.

Changing healthcare policy to fund, deliver and explicitly evaluate the MTM intervention in Medicare and Medicaid would solve this issue.

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the federal medical research agency dedicated to supporting scientific studies that result in better health outcomes.

**What's happening now:**

The NIH has successfully gone through the concept approval process to establish several Centers of Excellence that would focus on reducing the burden of diet-related diseases and nutrition disparities through support for Food Is Medicine research, patient care and education, community engagement, and research on the efficacy of Food is Medicine services.

**Why federal funding matters:**

This concept must now be funded. The federal investments that support the NIH’s Office of Nutrition’s work on Food Is Medicine interventions must be expanded to ensure access to these critical services.

**FARM BILL**

The 2023 Farm Bill presents an important opportunity to expand and diversify nutrition supports in a manner that improves the nation’s health outcomes and financial interests.

**What's happening now:**

Unfortunately, individuals who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves may not be able to access traditional SNAP even if they are eligible for the benefit.

We encourage Congress to create a pilot that enables MTM access for individuals who are too sick to cook or shop for themselves.

**Why federal funding matters:**

- Boosting access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Scaling investments that provide access to fresh fruits & vegetables through GusNIP.
- Enhancing consumer awareness about nutritious and healthy foods through SNAP-ED.
- Providing Medically Tailored Meals to ill Americans directly in their homes & communities.