



May 4, 2022

Dear Chair Gonzales and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, we are writing today to urge your support of HB22-1380, as this bill will make important strides towards addressing food insecurity, and streamlining technology and improving eligibility system processes for vital public benefit programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Investments from HB22-1380 will have positive impacts on our children, youth and families' long-term health.

Children's Hospital Colorado is proud to partner with the community to advocate for the health and well-being of kids and families. Our work goes beyond our hospital walls and into the communities we support. In addition to our patient care, Children's Hospital Colorado supports families by providing care coordination, advocacy and facilitating access to community programs and resources. Hunger Free Colorado recently reported that 33 percent of Coloradans lack reliable access to nutritious food and 16 percent of Colorado kids are not getting adequate nutrition due to financial constraints.¹

Programs like SNAP are intended to help alleviate food insecurity by enabling families to make their money stretch further on food and purchase healthier foods. However, small food retail outlets often struggle to keep prices down while simultaneously, many small farms report that they are struggling to connect with local retailers to sell their crops, causing prices to rise and fresh foods to be harder to access for Colorado families using SNAP. HB 22-1380 utilizes federal American Recovery Plan Act funding to invest in programs that will help mitigate these issues.

Increasing access to healthy foods decreases the risk of diet-related issues like iron deficiency, poor health, and developmental and behavioral issues for children and youth.² In addition, a study from the American Journal of Preventive Medicine reported that participation in SNAP is associated with reduced household and child food insecurity, lower odds of poor health and growth and developmental risk among infants and toddlers, and reduced hardships because of healthcare costs for their families. Improved SNAP participation and increased SNAP benefits that match the regional cost of food may be effective preventive health strategies for promoting the health and well-being of families with young children.³

HB22-1380 also streamlines and improves technology systems with various benefit programs like LEAP, TANF, and Medicaid. All of these programs can contribute to improved health and wellbeing among children and their families, and it is critical to remove enrollment and eligibility barriers. A 2019 report on reducing child poverty concluded that income support for families experiencing poverty can improve children's health and academic achievement, which in turn can lead to better health and higher earnings in adulthood.⁴ Economic security programs can blunt the negative effects of poverty and bring low-income children closer to equal opportunity. Research also indicates that economic security programs not only open doors of opportunity for participating low-income children but also lift their future health, productivity, and ability to contribute to their communities and the economy.⁵

We urge you to support HB22-1380 and thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill. If passed, we believe this bill will have a beneficial impact on Colorado children and families.

Sincerely,

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¹ [Hunger Facts - Hunger Free Colorado](#)

² [Poor Nutrition | CDC](#)

³ [SNAP, Young Children's Health, and Family Food Security and Healthcare Access - ScienceDirect](#)

⁴ [Consequences of Child Poverty - A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty - NCBI Bookshelf \(nih.gov\)](#)

⁵ [PathwaysWinter11_Duncan.pdf \(stanford.edu\)](#)