
MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: January 26, 2021

Bill: HB78 - Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021)

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair

Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND), is an organization representing approximately 1,200 licensed dietitians and nutritionists, dietetic interns, and students within the state of Maryland. We support the goals of this legislation to establish a Commission that will take action to achieve health equity for all of Maryland's residents.

Current literature suggests that there is a direct correlation between food insecurity and health disparities. Adults who are food insecure may be at an increased risk for a variety of negative health outcomes and health disparities. For example, a study found that food-insecure adults may be at an increased risk for obesity (Holben and Pheley, 2006). Another study found higher rates of chronic disease in low-income, food-insecure adults between the ages of 18 and 65 (Seligmar, Laria and Kushel, 2010). In addition, food-insecure children may also be at an increased risk for a variety of negative health outcomes, including obesity and developmental problems. Furthermore, reduced frequency, quality, variety, and quantity of consumed foods may have a negative effect on children's mental health (Burke, Martini, Cayer, Hardline, and Meade, 2019).

In addition to the list of factors identified on page 9-10 of HB78 we respectfully ask for the inclusion of the following as a new number 11: **"11. ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD"**, which will assist in the alleviation of food insecurity and health disparities.

Ensuring food security and access to healthy foods is a critical cornerstone to improving chronic health conditions, improved healthcare and health outcomes. The ability to identify where access is a problem will help inform the broader work and goals of the Commission.

For these reasons we ask for a FAVORABLE report on HB78 and Favorable consideration of this amendment

Dr. Glenda L. Lindsey, Dr. PH, MS, RDN, LDN
Public Policy Coordinator
Public Policy Panel
Helene Fletcher MS, RDN, LDN
MAND President

Reference :

1. [Burke MP, Martini LH, Çayır E, Hartline-Grafton HL, Meade RL. Severity of household food insecurity is positively associated with mental disorders among children and adolescents in the United States. J Nutr. 2016;146\(10\):2019-26. doi: 10.3945/jn.116.232298.](#)
2. [Cook JT, Frank DA. Food security, poverty, and human development in the United States. Ann N Y Acad Sci. 2008;1136\(1\):193-209.](#)
3. [Holben DH, Pheley AM. Diabetes risk and obesity in food-insecure households in rural Appalachian Ohio \[Internet\]. Prev Chronic Dis. 2006\[cited 2017 Nov 27\];3\(3\). Available from: \[http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/jul/05_0127.htm\]\(http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2006/jul/05_0127.htm\)](#)
4. [Seligman HK, Laraia BA, Kushel MB. Food insecurity is associated with chronic disease among low-income NHANES participants \[Internet\]. J Nutr. 2010 \[cited 2017 Nov 27\];140\(2\):304-10. Available from: <http://doi.org/10.3945/jn.109.112573>](#)