



## **Fueling Optimal Outcomes through Diet (FOOD) for Health Act**

The FOOD for Health Act, legislation introduced by U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), directs the Secretary of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to establish competitive grant funding for Food is Medicine programs around the country to help improve health outcomes through nutrition while lowering healthcare costs.

### **The FOOD for Health Act:**

- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to establish a pilot program that provides grants to Food is Medicine programs around the country prioritizing local foods and regional diversity.
- Encourages activities such as medically tailored meals, produce prescriptions, emergency on-site food pantries, and individual or group-based culinary education.
- Assists those who struggle with diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, obesity, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, and other diseases as determined appropriate by the Secretary.
- Requires the Secretary to submit an initial report to Congress two years into the pilot analyzing the efficiency and impact of the pilot on patient outcomes and system costs.
- Authorizes \$20 million through FY 2029.

### **Background:**

Food insecurity often disproportionately affects under-served communities, including those with lower incomes or limited access to grocery stores and fresh, healthy food options. These communities may rely more heavily on convenience stores or fast-food restaurants, where inexpensive but often less nutritious foods are more readily available. The significance of wholesome nutrition cannot be overstated. Simply put, good food is imperative to good health.

Nearly half of all-American adults have one or more preventable chronic disease linked to poor-quality nutrition and physical inactivity. These ailments include, but are not limited to, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and poor bone health. This comes with a cost—as nearly \$173 billion is spent annually on health care for obesity alone with an estimated \$1.1 trillion for all diet-related diseases. Food is Medicine initiatives work to address these challenges using food-based interventions to help prevent, manage, and treat diet-related diseases.

### **Endorsements:**

Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico, Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network, New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, Good Bank of Eastern New Mexico, Three Sisters Kitchen, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dion's Chicago Dream, Feeding America, Foodsmart, Good Food is Good Medicine, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Illinois Public Health Institute, Wound Pros, Down at the Farms