



Lawmakers Can Prioritize Health by Advancing “Food Is Medicine” Solutions

House Bill 2946 is needed to help make Texans healthy again

Texas, February 26, 2025 – The [North Texas Food Bank](#) (NTFB) joins a coalition of more than 80 organizations in the Texas Food Policy Roundtable in urging state legislators to pass [HB 2946](#). The “Food is Medicine” bill – filed last week by Texas Rep. Tom Oliverson – would allow for Medicaid reimbursements to cover nutrition support services.

Research indicates that nonclinical factors, such as where a person lives, works, and plays, contribute to as much as 80 percent of a person’s health outcomes. Food insecurity is a key driver of health, and as a result, a driver of higher health care costs. The [Centers for Disease Control suggests](#) that food insecurity adds about \$53 billion annually to health care costs in the U.S.

“Nutrition and health are deeply connected,” said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas, the state association of food banks. “Food insecurity is associated with higher rates of chronic and diet-related diseases and when someone is sick, having to choose between food and treatment can lead to serious complications. Understanding this connection is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to improve both food security and health care outcomes in our state. Access to healthy and nutritious foods can help to prevent health issues, manage chronic diseases, and lower the associated health costs.”

Gov. Greg Abbott signed [HB 1575](#) into law in June 2023. The bill recognizes that non-medical factors impact health outcomes and requires that pregnant Medicaid beneficiaries be screened for non-medical needs. It also offers case management services to connect those beneficiaries

with non-medical resources in the community. In response to the new law, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) in Texas began using screening questions developed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to assess the non-medical needs of their pregnant patients.

“In the 2023 legislative session, Texas lawmakers recognized the importance of addressing non-medical drivers of health and took action to improve health outcomes for pregnant patients,” Cole said. “HB 1575 was a promising step in the right direction. With high-risk pregnant Texans now screened for food insecurity, we believe the next step is ensuring that the food and nutrition services resulting from these referrals are also covered by Medicaid.”

In addition to following recent statewide actions, HB 2946 aligns with [national, bipartisan efforts](#) to invest in “food as medicine” solutions in the Medicaid program.

The Feeding Texas network and the Texas Food Policy Roundtable call on lawmakers to authorize the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to pursue Medicaid financing for medically appropriate, cost effective, evidence-based solutions to address non-medical drivers of health. In HB 2946, this would be accomplished via “in-lieu of services” (ILOS). ILOS is a provision that can be added to Medicaid contracts that allow MCOs to substitute Health-Related Social Needs (HRSNs) for traditional medical care.

“Optimal health thrives on the foundation of proper nutrition, where what we eat directly shapes how we feel and function,” stated Trisha Cunningham, President and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. “To create a healthier Texas, we need a healthcare system that takes a holistic approach to patient care, focusing not only on medical treatment but also on nutrition. By introducing a streamlined Medicaid reimbursement model that integrates nutrition support, doctors could prescribe healthy food, leading to better health outcomes for Texans. This model would increase access to nutritious food, strengthen existing infrastructure, and help lower healthcare costs over time.”

Join us by contacting your state senator and representative, urging them to prioritize health and nutrition for Texans facing hunger by supporting the “Food is Medicine” bill, HB 2946. You can contact them using this quick and easy [link](#).

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About Feeding Texas

Feeding Texas is a network of 20 food banks and leads a unified effort for a hunger-free Texas. Learn more and find your local food bank at feedingtexas.org.

About the North Texas Food Bank

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a leading nonprofit organization that fights hunger and provides children, seniors and families in North Texas access to nutritious food. For over 40 years, we have been at the forefront of hunger relief, committed to ensuring that no one in our community lacks access to healthy food. Our extensive network of 500 food pantries and organizations, volunteers, and donors enables us to deliver more than 100 million nutritious meals annually to those in need. Beyond just addressing hunger, we focus on nourishing lives by offering nutrition education, investing in our network partners, innovating solutions to eliminate hunger and advocating for policies that tackle the root causes of food insecurity.

Our dedication to excellence is reflected in our 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, highlighting our strong governance, integrity, and financial stability. As a proud member of Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger relief network, we are committed to ensuring everyone in North Texas has the nourishment needed to lead a healthy and fulfilling life. For more information, visit www.ntfb.org or connect with us on social media @NorthTexasFoodBank.

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