

The 2016 Hunger Report by the Numbers

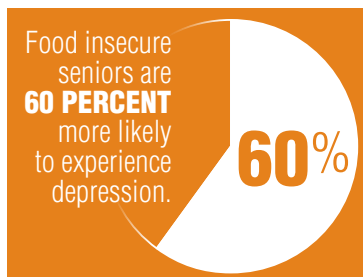
Hunger and Health

Each year since 2008, the number of food-insecure people in the United States has hovered between 48 million and 50 million, approximately one in six people in the country.¹

Food insecurity increases, by nearly 50 percent, a person's chances of becoming a high-cost user of healthcare services within five years.²

In 2014, the most recent year with complete data, 19.2 percent of U.S. households with children (7.5 million households) reported being food-insecure. In about half of these households, both adults and children were food-insecure.³

A study of 14,000 children, using data collected at intervals between birth and the start of kindergarten, found that when mothers are moderately to severely depressed, the risk of child and household food insecurity increases by 50 percent to 80 percent.⁴



Between 2001 and 2013, the threat of hunger among seniors increased by 45 percent.⁵ Food-insecure seniors are 60 percent more likely than other seniors to experience depression.⁶

In 2014, food insecurity in the United States increased healthcare expenditures by \$160.7 billion.⁷

Treat or Eat

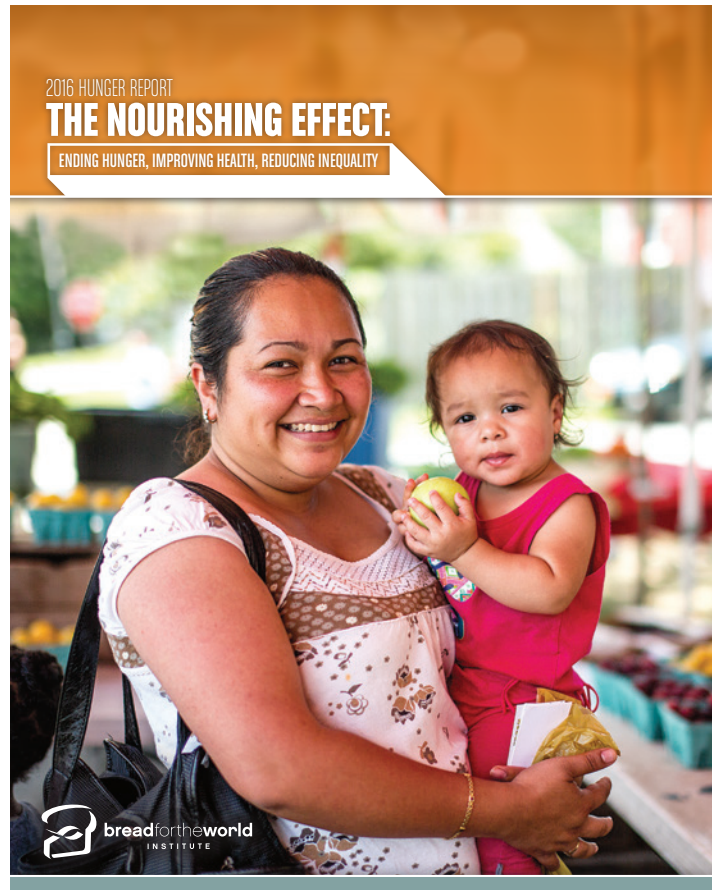
One-third of all chronically ill adults in the United States cannot afford to buy food, medications, or both.⁸

In a national survey of cancer patients, one in 10 said they had to cut back on food and other basic necessities to pay for treatment.⁹

One in three households struggles to pay medical bills—even though 70 percent of these struggling households have health insurance.¹⁰

Medical bills are the leading cause of personal bankruptcy,¹¹ and more than 11 million people in 2013 were driven into poverty as a result of out-of-pocket medical expenses.¹²

One-quarter of privately insured people do not have enough savings to cover the cost of their deductibles.¹³



Premiums for employer-based insurance have risen by 212 percent since 2000, while wages have risen by just 54 percent over this period.¹⁴

An Ounce of Prevention

Health care accounts for 24 percent of all spending by the federal government.¹⁵ Federal food assistance accounts for 3 percent of federal spending.¹⁶

3 percent—the share of federal spending on nutrition programs.

24 percent—the share of federal spending on health care.

The average cost of a hospital stay in the United States is \$2,157 per day.¹⁷ In contrast, a key prevention strategy—SNAP benefits—costs the government about \$4.50 per day per recipient.¹⁸

In 2011, USDA estimated the cost of a day's worth of healthy food to be no less than \$6.65.¹⁹

In 2014, the typical U.S. household spent \$50.00 per person per week on food.²⁰ The average monthly SNAP benefit per person was \$125.35, or about \$29.25 per week.²¹

The average medical cost for a premature/low birth weight baby is \$49,033,²² while it costs approximately \$743 a year for a pregnant woman to participate in the WIC program.²³



In 2014, the average monthly SNAP benefit per person was **\$125.35**, or about **\$29.25** per week.



A 1992 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) showed that WIC cost \$296 million a year but saved more than \$472 million in federal and state Medicaid costs—a net savings of \$176 million a year.²⁴

Under the Older Americans Act (OAA), seniors are provided with nutritious home-delivered meals. In 2009, only 3 percent of adults 65 and older received home-delivered meals.²⁵ An increase of 1 percent in the number of adults receiving home-delivered meals through the OAA would have saved state Medicaid programs \$109 million.²⁶

Endnotes

¹ Alisha Coleman-Jensen et al. (September 2015), *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014*, United States Department of Agriculture, p. 8.

² Tiffany Fitzpatrick et al. (2015), "Looking Beyond Income and Education: Socioeconomic Status Gradients Among Future High-Cost Users of Health Care," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* Vol. 49, No. 2.

³ See Note 1.

⁴ Kelly Noonan, Hope Corman, and Nancy Reichman (2007), "Effects of Maternal Depression on Family Food Insecurity," *University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research Discussion Paper Series, DP2014-07*.

⁵ James P. Ziliak and Craig Gundersen (April 2015), *The State of Senior Hunger in America 2013: An Annual Report*, National Foundation to End Senior Hunger and National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities.

⁶ Feeding America: Senior Hunger Fact Sheet.

⁷ John T. Cook and Ana Paula Poblacion (2015), "Estimating the Health-Related Costs of Hunger and Food Insecurity," in Bread for the World Institute (2015), *The Nourishing Effect: Ending Hunger, Improving Health, Reducing Inequality*.

⁸ Seth A. Berkowitz, Hilary K. Seligman, and Nitesh K. Choudhry (April 2014), "Treat or Eat: Food Insecurity, Cost-related Medication Underuse, and Unmet Needs," *The American Journal of Medicine* Volume 127, Number 4.

⁹ USA Today, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard School of Public Health (November 2006), *National Survey of Households Affected by Cancer*.

¹⁰ Karen Pollitz and Cynthia Cox (January 2014), *Medical Debt among People with Health Insurance*, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Kathleen Short (2014), *The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2013*, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports P60-251.

¹³ Drew Altman (March 11, 2015), "Health-Care Deductibles Climbing Out of Reach," *The Wall Street Journal*.

¹⁴ Drew Altman (March 31, 2015), "Americans Don't Feel the Slowdown in Health Costs," *The Wall Street Journal*.

¹⁵ Where do our federal tax dollars go?, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

¹⁶ www.fns.usda.gov/pd/overview (See Summary of Annual Data)

¹⁷ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation: Hospital Adjusted Expenses Per Inpatient Day.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Average Monthly Benefit Per Person (FY 2010-14).

¹⁹ United States Department for Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (September 2011), *Eat Healthy on a Budget: The Consumer Economics Perspective*.

²⁰ See Note 1, Table 6.

²¹ See Note 18.

²² National WIC Association (November 2011), WIC: Solid Returns on Investment While Reducing the Deficit.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office (1992), *Early Intervention: Federal Investments Like WIC Can Produce Savings*.

²⁵ Kali S. Thomas and Vincent Mor (2013), "The Care Span: Providing More Home-Delivered Meals in One Way to Keep Older Adults With Low Care Needs Out of Nursing Homes," *Health Affairs* 32, No. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

