CalAIM
Expanding Medically-Supportive Food and Nutrition Services
Opportunity:
In North Carolina, Massachusetts and Oregon Medicaid waivers have been used to provide food-based support to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. California should join these pioneering states in their effort to support innovative prevention and treatment strategies. The waiver provides an opportunity to include medically-supportive food and nutrition into the provision of Medi-Cal to improve health and reduce healthcare costs. The current CalAIM proposal incorporates home-delivered meals at discharge and medically tailored meals as “in lieu of” services for beneficiaries (pages 159-160 of the CalAIM Proposal) and is a natural starting point for incorporating additional medically-supportive food and nutrition services that can improve health and reduce healthcare costs.

Our Proposal:
As part of the overall vision for CalAIM and specifically in an attempt to improve outcomes for the state’s most vulnerable populations and reduce costs, we propose expanding medically-supportive food and nutrition services that address food insecurity -- a major social determinant of health -- and nutritional health into Medi-Cal. To accomplish this goal we propose the waiver include “Medically-Supportive Food and Nutrition Services” into its proposal as 1) an expansion of home-delivered and medically tailored meals which are currently included as in lieu of services and/or 2) through other mechanisms within the waiver that would enhance population health and care management. Healthy food and adequate nutrition are a fundamental part of treating, preventing, and managing chronic disease\(^1,2,3\) and can significantly improve a patient's quality of life and health status\(^4,5\) while also reducing health care costs\(^6,7\). Expanding the definition of “Medically-Supportive Food and Nutrition Services” would extend allowable services to include other types of medically-supportive food and nutrition that improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs in addition to medically tailored meals, services which are already included in the current proposal. Evidence suggests that a broader range of healthy food supports beyond medically tailored meals can improve health outcomes\(^4,8,9,10,11\) and reduce healthcare costs\(^7,8,10\). The level of care provided would range from prevention to treatment based on the level of acuity and need of the individuals.

Target Populations:
Meet the health needs-based criteria:

- being food insecure or at risk of food insecurity
- living with a chronic condition or at risk for a chronic condition
- needing assistance with one or more documented activities of daily living or independent activities of daily living
- being pregnant and up to 24 months postpartum
- being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- children and transitional age youth experiencing four or more categories of adverse childhood experiences

“Medically-Supportive Food and Nutrition Services” would include, but is not limited to:

- Direct medically-supportive food assistance
  - healthy food boxes, groceries, or meals to prevent or manage chronic disease
  - healthy food vouchers and food prescriptions to prevent or manage chronic disease, including but not limited to fruits and vegetables
  - medically tailored groceries
medically tailored meals

- Nutrition education, cooking education, and/or behavioral coaching and counseling, when paired with one of the forms of direct medically-supportive food assistance above
- Linkages to community-based food services (SNAP & WIC application assistance, food bank referrals)
- Transportation for accessing healthy food to prevent or manage chronic disease

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Supporters:

**Health Related Organizations:**
- Adventist Health Ukiah Valley
- Alameda Health Consortium
- Alameda Health System
- American Diabetes Association Northern California/Hawaii
- American Heart Association
- APLA Health
- Asian Health Services
- Axis Community Health
- California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
- California Conference of Local Health Department Nutritionists
- California Conference of Local Health Officers
- California Primary Care Association
- Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County
- Community Health Partnership
- Eisner Health
- Gardner Health Services
- Health Right 360
- Institute for Natural Medicine
- Integrative Health Policy Consortium
- La Clínica De La Raza
- LifeLong Medical Care
- Los Angeles Christian Health Centers
- Mendocino Community Health Clinic
- Native American Health Center
- National Health Foundation
- North East Medical Services
- Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
- Roots Community Health Center
3/6/2020
Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System
San Francisco Health Network
The Health Trust
Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center
Tri-City Health Center
University of California San Diego School of Medicine
University of California San Francisco
West Oakland Health

**Governmental Departments & Programs:**
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
ALL IN Alameda County
Food as Medicine Collaborative
Go for Health! Santa Cruz County
San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco Board of Supervisors Food Security Task Force

**Medical Societies & Associations:**
Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association
American Nutrition Association
American Society of Acupuncturists
Doctors for America
Islamic Medical Association of North America
Napa County Medical Society
San Francisco Marin Medical Society
San Mateo County Medical Association
Sonoma County Medical Association
Visiting Nursing Association

**Community Based Organizations**
Alameda County Community Food Bank
Blue Zones Projects Monterey County
California FarmLink
California Food is Medicine Coalition
California Food Policy Advocates
CCOF
Center for Care Innovations
Ceres Community Project
CUESA
Davis Street Family Resource Center
Del Norte and Tribal Lands Community Food Council
Everyone’s Harvest
Farm Discovery at Live Earth
Food For Thought
Fresh Approach
Hunger Action Los Angeles
References:

3/6/2020


Health Impact of Medically-Supportive Food and Nutrition

Healthy food and adequate nutrition are a fundamental part of preventing, managing, and reversing chronic disease. CALM’s October 2019 proposal recognizes the value and health benefits of food supports and includes medically tailored meals (MTM) and home delivered meals as a covered benefit. Building on this great progress, CALM can generate more cost savings and improve health further by incorporating a broader spectrum of medically supportive foods into its proposal, including:

- Healthy food boxes, groceries, or meals
- Healthy food vouchers and food prescriptions
- Nutritional support when paired with medically supportive food

Evidence suggests that a broad range of healthy food support beyond medically tailored meals can improve health:

- ↓HbA1c
  - avg blood sugar: 0.5-2.1% pts<sup>1,2,4</sup>
- ↓Blood Pressure
  - -16 mmHg<sup>6</sup>
- ↓BMI
  - -0.4-0.7 kg/m<sup>2</sup><sup>5,6</sup>
- ↓Preterm Birth
  - 37% reduction<sup>6</sup>
- ↓Depression
  - Clinical depression score (PHQ-9): up to 47% reduction<sup>6</sup>

Healthcare Savings

- ↓43-75% fewer ED visits<sup>7</sup> and admissions<sup>3</sup>
- ↓38% reduction in emergency transportation<sup>7</sup>

$40-100B+

massive potential net savings<sup>8</sup>

Benefits to expanding medical food support beyond MTM

Culturally Relevant: Allows patients to access culturally diverse foods beyond what might be prepared as part of medically tailored meals

Sustainable: Less prescriptive diets/meals promotes culinary practice and long term nutritional change

Health Investment: Allows for broader reach of patients earlier on in disease course - promoting prevention and greater value

Cost Effective: Reduces overhead of meal prep and delivery

References: