



According to **research** released this month in the *American Journal of Medicine* and an **article** in *The Atlantic*, it turns out that access to good food can be preventive medicine. Nearly one in three U.S. adults with a chronic disease has problems paying for food, medicine, or both. Researchers at Harvard and the University of California at San Francisco studied data from the 2011 U.S. Centers for Disease Control's National Health Interview Survey, and of the 10,000 adults who reported that they had a chronic disease such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis, high blood pressure, stroke, a mental health problem, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, nearly one in five said they said they had problems affording food during the past 30 days, or in other words, were food insecure. Nearly one in four said they had skipped medication dosages because of cost. More than one in ten said they had problems paying for both food and medication. And especially for those whose illnesses were most diet-related, like diabetes and heart disease, individuals were not as concerned with finding *any* food, as finding the *right* food to keep themselves healthy. Because nutrition is our signature difference at God's Love, we completely understand this imperative.

The Atlantic article suggests that Medicaid could help patients afford food and their medications, but the author only suggests that Medicaid pay for prescriptions. At God's Love, we know that until food and nutrition services, especially medically-tailored home delivered meals, are incorporated into the medical care continuum through coverage in private and public insurance, our nation will not reap maximum benefits in cost savings and better health outcomes.

To put the cost savings in perspective, MANNA, a sister FNS agency in Philadelphia that delivers medically-tailored home delivered meals, recently mounted a rigorous **study** matching MANNA clients to a control group also within a local managed care organization (MCO) to compare healthcare costs on and off the MANNA FNS program. The results were stunning. Average health care costs for MANNA clients fell 62% for 3 months after beginning services (for a total of almost \$30,000). The impact of feeding patients the right food for their diagnoses is undeniable.

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