A Historic Moment for the Food is Medicine Movement: Karen Pearl, President & CEO, on the White House Conference on Hunger, Health, and Nutrition

By Karen Pearl, President & CEO

Dear Community,

The Biden-Harris Administration’s White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health took place today, with medically tailored meals (MTM) and “Food Is Medicine” featured as high-level recommendations.

We are thrilled that the “Food is Medicine” movement has gained such momentum and the recommendations prove it: The administration’s National Strategy supports legislative pilots to test MTM for individuals in traditional Medicaid and Medicare who are experiencing diet-related health conditions. The Strategy further promises to change lives and the face of hunger and health in our country as it also
recommends expanding SNAP to underserved populations, advancing access to healthy school meals, and more.

We have national attention on MTMs and our urgent and life-affirming work is more important than ever. Research shows that medically tailored meals are a win for everyone because they lower healthcare costs, improve healthcare outcomes, and keep our neighbors living with illness out of the hospital and at home where they are happiest and most comfortable.

Watch the Panel

Today, I was honored to represent God’s Love We Deliver and the Food is Medicine Coalition at the first session of the White House Conference, “Food is Medicine: Bringing Nutrition Out of the Healthcare Shadows.” Moderated by Dr. Rajiv Shah of the Rockefeller Foundation, I was joined by Dr. Sachin Jain, CEO of SCAN Health, and Dr. Kofi Essel, Head of Culinary Medical Program and Assistant Professor at George Washington University.

Our panel discussed the role of nutrition, healthy food and medically tailored meals in preventing, managing, and treating diet-related diseases. The integration of Food Is Medicine interventions into healthcare prioritizes social determinants of health and highlights how Food is Medicine interventions increase equity by closing the health disparities gaps so many communities now experience.

It was an honor to represent God’s Love and our peer organizations in the Food is Medicine Coalition, elevating the work we have done for more than a decade to ensure that those most in need, no matter where they live or how they access healthcare, can receive the life-sustaining meals and nutrition counseling they urgently need when they are sick and unable to take care of themselves.

There is still much work to be done to secure medically tailored meals as a healthcare benefit covered by Medicaid, Medicare and all insurance programs. We will work diligently with the Biden-Harris Administration and Congress to make this a reality. This is an exciting step into our future, as we care for, through nutrition and tailored meals, the most vulnerable among us.

Our work continues.

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As one of the leaders of the Food is Medicine Coalition, a national volunteer coalition of non-profit medically tailored meal providers, we are so proud to note that medically tailored meals (MTM) are featured as a key nutrit...