

In a recent report presented during the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) conference, *Food Insecurity: Starving our Future*, pediatricians are urged to screen all children for food insecurity. Though there has been some improvement over the past few years, data still suggests that more than 15 million children in the United States live in households that struggle to put food on the table.

Child hunger is a growing public health concern in the United States, and is substantially higher than the national average among households with incomes near or below the federal poverty line, households with children headed by single parents, and among minority households. Health problems linked to hunger affect children behaviourally, emotionally, and physically. In the long term, high healthcare costs are a result of chronic child undernutrition. To address the increasing concern, pediatricians around the nation came together to release a policy statement stressing the importance of federal, state and local nutrition programs to help combat the immediate and potentially lifelong impact food insecurity has on children in households that lack the means to get enough nutritious food on a regular basis.

We applaud the AAP on their recommendation. Nutrition must become an integral part of our healthcare system if we are going to achieve our national healthcare goals. Here at God's Love, we recognize the crisis of food insecurity and its harmful effects on children, so we not only feed our clients, who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves, but also their children. By feeding children nutritious meals, we go beyond hunger to prevent childhood malnutrition, thereby supporting developmental milestones for each child. In addition, at the national level, programs like ours can significantly impact the rising healthcare costs that are associated with diseases like obesity and diabetes that are the result of childhood hunger. Food is medicine for the smallest among us too.