

I write from Washington, DC where I have been participating, as a presenter and attendee, in the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference, hosted by [FRAC](#) and [Feeding America](#), with sponsorship by our friends at [MAZON](#) and others. As the head of the national Food Is Medicine Coalition, a coalition of food and nutrition providers that has been treating the cause and symptoms of chronic and severe disease through diet and nutrition for over 30 years, I am thrilled to see the broader anti-hunger world embracing the cause of food as medicine.

Along with colleagues Dr. Seth Berkowitz from Harvard Medical School/Massachusetts General Hospital, Robert Greenwald from the [Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School](#), and David Waters from [Community Servings](#), our sister organization in Boston, we kicked off the first day with a panel on Opportunities in Healthcare to Address Hunger in the US. Much to our excitement, it was standing room only (with many people sitting in the aisles) at our session. People stayed long after to talk about how to add a greater focus on nutrition and chronic disease in their programs and how to seize opportunities in their state to establish part-nerships with healthcare institutions to address hunger.

The lunchtime plenary was a wonderful surprise, focusing on Food is Medicine throughout the welcoming remarks from FRAC and Feeding America, and from the esteemed panel of speakers. Dr. Hillary Seligman, Director of the Food Policy, Hunger and Health Programs at the University of California San Francisco, presented on the ground-breaking relationship her research has drawn between [food insecurity and diabetes and obesity](#). Dr. Sandra G. Hassink, President of the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), spoke about the role of sound nutrition in preventing diabetes and obesity in children. Stephanie Cihon, Director of Community Relations at ProMedica, a progressive Ohio-based health insurance company, discussed their [Food Pharmacy program](#), a place where the food needs of patients were considered and addressed alongside their medical needs, resulting in better outcomes. I speak for my colleagues around the country when I say that the energy in the room for this and other sessions that talked about the role of anti-hunger programs in preventing and addressing the costly epidemic of chronic disease in our country through nutrition was inspiring.

And, hearing “Food is Medicine” spoken so many times let me know that the message our coalition has been sending is getting through in policy and advocacy efforts across the country. Our continued collaboration with our colleagues in the anti-hunger movement to advance Food is Medicine in policy that affects all of our clients has great promise for the future. And that’s a great thing.

