

## **SUPPORT FOR REQUEST OF NUTRITION FUNDS**

### **The Need**

- Approximately 36% of California seniors, some 2.7 million, don't have enough income to meet their basic needs (Elder Economic Security Index), with more than 1 million threatened by hunger each day
- It is estimated that 1.3 million seniors in California are isolated, living alone
- 1.5 million seniors qualify for Medi-Cal

### **Poverty Implications**

- Studies show that there is a direct relationship between poverty and poor nutrition
- 8.6% of California seniors have incomes below the federal poverty level
- There has been a 57% growth of our seniors who are eligible for Medi-Cal since 2011

### **Current Services**

- The home-delivered meal program reaches out to the older, frail seniors that are invisible and living throughout the community in all types of neighborhoods
- Congregate mealsites serve numerous seniors, including the hidden homeless living in cars, etc., and provide health education and activities for all attendees, including the socially isolated, such as those who have recently lost a spouse.
- 7 million congregate meals are served every year
- Almost 11 million home-delivered meals are served annually
- Some 55,000 older, frail Californians are receiving home-delivered meals at an average of 4 meals a week.
- The average price of a home-delivered meal is \$7.50.
- A congregate meal averages about \$12.50 in costs (and adds socialization and other health-related activities and benefits).
- Home delivered meals are serving only 1.8% of the nutritionally at-risk seniors
- Congregate mealsites serve only 4% of the nutritionally at-risk seniors

## **Request for Funds**

- An additional \$12.5 million is needed to maintain a service level of food for 6% of the at-risk population. That growth includes a half-million increase in the number of Calif. Seniors who are so poor that they qualify for Medi-Cal.

## **Cost Savings**

Food-insecure seniors are 2.33 times more likely to report fair/poor health status and have a higher nutritional risk<sup>1</sup>. Food-insecure seniors are at greater risk for chronic health conditions and experience the following:

- 60 percent more likely to experience depression
- 53 percent more likely to report a heart attack
- 52 percent more likely to develop asthma
- 40 percent more likely to report an experience of congestive heart failure

A Brown University Study<sup>2</sup> estimated that every \$25 spent by a state per person over the age of 65 on home-delivered meals, reduces the low-care nursing home population by 1%.

In addition to the cost benefits, meal programs need additional funding because no senior should have to go hungry in California. Being hungry, homeless, or ill does NOT have to be a condition of growing old in California.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee JS, Frongillo, Jr. EA. (2001). Nutritional and health consequences are associated with food insecurity among U.S. elderly persons

<sup>2</sup> The Relationship between Older Americans Act Title III State Expenditures and Prevalence of Low-Care Nursing Home Residents;Kali S. Thomas, PhD, MA and Vincent Mor, PhD, MED