

# **Screening and Intervening for Food Insecurity**

***A Panel and Conversation***





“ A two question validated screening tool is recommended for pediatricians screening for food insecurity at scheduled health maintenance visits or sooner, if indicated. ”

~ American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement



## The Hunger Vital Sign™ is a validated tool to screen for food insecurity

Within the past 12 months,  
we worried whether our food  
would run out before we got  
money to buy more.

- Often True
- Sometimes True
- Never True
- Don't Know/Refused

Within the past 12 months,  
the food we bought just  
didn't last and we didn't have  
money to get more.

- Often True
- Sometimes True
- Never True
- Don't Know/Refused

A patient **screens positive** for food insecurity if the response is “often true” or “sometimes true” to either or both of the above statements.

# Validated Food Insecurity Screening Measures ...

- Will be incorporated into *Bright Futures*;
- Will be incorporated into the 2018 update of EPIC's base model;
- Will likely be incorporated into CA's *Staying Healthy Assessment*.
- Have been adopted by the Oregon Health as a Medicaid performance improvement metric;

# CFPA Recognizes Value in Supporting State Efforts to Screen for Food Insecurity

**Screening and Interventions for  
Food Insecurity in Health Care Settings**  
State Strategies to Increase an  
Underutilized Practice in California

Melissa Cannon  
September 2016



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Screening has the potential to better connect the following groups to CalFresh:

- Young children
- Older adults
- Individuals with chronic disease
- A growing Medi-Cal population



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

# AAP News

**Breaking News**

October 23, 2015

[www.aapnews.org](http://www.aapnews.org)

## Identifying food insecurity: Two-question screening tool has 97% sensitivity

by **Lori O'Keefe** • *Correspondent*

*"Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more. Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more." Yes or no?*

Answering yes to either of these questions indicates that a family is struggling with food insecurity, according to a new AAP policy statement titled *Promoting Food Security for All Children*.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food-insecure household as one in which "access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money or other resources."

Pediatricians can use the two-item tool to screen children for food insecurity and refer those who screen positively to resources that support access to adequate healthy food, according to the policy, which is available at [www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2015-3301](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2015-3301) and will appear in the November issue of *Pediatrics*.

"It is important for pediatricians to be aware of the fact that food insecurity can occur in any population," said Sarah Jane Schwarzenberg, M.D., FAAP, a lead author of the statement and a member of the AAP Committee on Nutrition. "I think sometimes people believe food insecurity affects only inner-city, impoverished people, but in fact, after the recession, we saw people in the suburbs and nontraditional areas experiencing food insecurity as well."

### Impacts on child health

Food insecurity can negatively affect behavior and development and have a lifelong impact on health. According to the policy statement, children living in food-insecure households are more likely to experience:

- stress, contributing to depression and anxiety;
- worse overall health and more hospitalizations when they are 3 years old or younger;
- iron deficiency;
- lower bone density in preadolescent boys;
- obesity due to lack of access to healthy foods;
- lower cognitive skills;
- dysregulated behavior;
- developmental problems affecting school performance; and
- malnutrition that can lead to diabetes, hyperlipidemia and cardiovascular disease later in life.

### Pediatricians' role

A resolution titled "Universal Screening for Hunger/Food Insecurity During Office Visits" was ranked No. 7 by attendees of the 2015 AAP Annual Leadership Forum.

"It can be embarrassing for families to say they are struggling, but I think the onus is on us as pediatricians to make families feel comfortable by explaining that food security correlates with children's health and that lack of access to food can severely impact health and the opportunity to learn," said Patricia J. Flanagan, M.D., FAAP, a co-author of the policy statement and vice chair



**Leslie Goodfriend**, Senior Health Services Manager  
*Santa Cruz County Human Services Department*



**Elisa Orona**, Executive Director  
*Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County*



**Amanda Schultz**, CalFresh Outreach Director  
*San Diego Hunger Coalition*



**Teri Olle**, Director of Policy & Advocacy  
*SF-Marin Food Bank*

# Resources

- California Food Policy Advocate's White Paper on Screening and Intervening for Food Insecurity
  - [http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/CFPA-FIScreeningsWhitePaper\\_FINAL.pdf](http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/CFPA-FIScreeningsWhitePaper_FINAL.pdf)
- FRAC and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Toolkit for Screening
  - <http://frac.org/aaptoolkit>
- San Diego Hunger Coalition's Rx for CalFresh
  - <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/sdhc-research-reports#5>