Food Insecurity and Seniors: Addressing the Issue

Presenter: Allison Bernal  RD, LD
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Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

• Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
• Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
• Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
• Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.
Food Insecurity

- The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Source: Life Sciences Research Office

Food Insecurity Facts

• Georgia ranks **seventh** in rates of senior hunger.
  - Source: [www.mowaa.org/about-senior-hunger](http://www.mowaa.org/about-senior-hunger)

• Food insecurity in Georgia is 23.8%, nationally it is 20.3%

• Factors of food insecurity: Access/food desserts, living alone, never married, reside in the south, ability to prepare
## Consequences of Food Insecurity

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<tr>
<th>Increased Nutrition Risk</th>
<th>Unhealthy Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Cognitive Function</td>
<td>Exacerbation of diet-related chronic illness</td>
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<td>Non-adherence to prescribed medications</td>
<td>Increased healthcare utilization</td>
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<td>Extended hospital stays</td>
<td>Increased caregiver demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety/Depression</td>
<td>Decreased quality of life</td>
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Jung Sun Lee, *Food Insecurity, Food and Nutrition Programs, and Aging: Experiences in Georgia*, Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly, 2010
### Recommendations

- **CDC, Georgia Supermarket Task Force, Georgia Food Policy Council**

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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions/Strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritize SNAP/WIC enrollment</td>
<td>Develop safe, affordable transportation</td>
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<td>Explore food hub opportunities/locations</td>
<td>EBT in Farmer’s Markets</td>
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<td>Financial incentives to attract grocery stores and mobile farmers to food desserts</td>
<td>Connect beginning farmers, food distributors, and retailers to collaborate on local food infrastructure</td>
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<td>Promote adoption of state grown purchasing priority</td>
<td>Include nutrition education whenever possible</td>
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Senior SNAP

- Simplified Application
- Medical Deductions
- No face-to-face meeting

SNAP is underutilized by older adults. Currently, it is estimated that 89,000 eligible older adults in Georgia are not participating (35.5%).

Barriers: Stigma, Application issues, Misperception of benefit amounts.

Division of Aging Services

- Strong partnership with DFCS
- SNAP Outreach Grant
- SNAP-Ed Grant
- Georgia Food Policy Council (Education and Consumption Workgroup)
Looking Ahead…

• Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with DFCS, Georgia Supermarket Task Force and Georgia Food Policy Council
• Increase referrals to food resources
• Enhance data collection and reporting
Questions?

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