



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Christina Dettman

(502) 229-2791

Julianne Hatton

(502) 564-6786

Inaugural summit aims to tackle senior hunger in Kentucky

FRANKFORT, Ky. (October 30, 2019) - The Commonwealth of Kentucky's Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) held its inaugural Kentucky Senior Hunger Summit today in Frankfort.

The event connected community partners in finding real solutions to issues surrounding senior food insecurity.

"There is no reason anyone in our state should go hungry. Whether it's a child or an older adult or anywhere between. We have the resources – it's a matter of raising awareness of the issue and communicating across systems to ensure food gets on the tables of those who need it most," said Shannon Gadd, Commissioner for DAIL.

Nearly 5 million older adults currently face hunger in the United States. In Kentucky, 16.6% of the 60+ population suffer from food insecurity, a 10% increase over the last four years.

"Over the next several years, we are going to see an increasing number of people age in place. As such, it is critical that we develop resources and supports now to ensure that as the Baby Boomer generation turns 65 and older, we have ways to address food insecurity, especially in ways that keeps people living at home and in the community," said Adam Meier, Secretary for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Extensive research has shown a strong correlation between food insecurity and chronic health conditions. A 2018 federal report shows food-insecure households spend about 45% more (\$6,100) on medical care in a year than people in food-secure households (\$4,200).

"Ending Senior Hunger is not just about producing food. Can you drive? Can you make phone calls? Can you educate others? We all have a role to play in our community," said Gadd.

Right now the health care costs for food insecurity in Kentucky total \$854,718,000. And nationally, only 2 in 5 seniors eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are enrolled. These members of our population are more likely to suffer from depression, asthma, chest pain, high blood pressure, and limited activity.

Anyone interested in helping seniors should contact CHFS, their local senior center, or their Area Agency on Aging.

Need sound? Click here: <https://streamable.com/jnjik>.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies

in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.