



Council for Responsible Nutrition

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President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff
Ambassador Susan E. Rice, White House Domestic Policy Advisor
Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra
Chef José Andrés
Congressman Jim McGovern
Senator Cory Booker
Director Susan T. Mayne, Ph.D.

Dear Participants in the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health:

The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN)¹, the leading trade association for the dietary supplement and functional food industry, urges the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to identify policies that address disparities in nutrition as well as hunger. CRN previously submitted recommendations to the White House Conference in July, but today reiterates its earlier calls for attention to better nutrition as well as reducing hunger.

As the conference title articulates, this event should address improvements to nutrition (sometimes referred to as “hidden hunger”) as well as physical hunger. No one should have to go to bed hungry, and everyone should have access to a variety of food that provides a sense of satiety, but focusing solely on calories and food quantity would be shortsighted. Better nutrition leads to healthier lives. Public policy should consider how to increase intake of essential nutrients among all socioeconomic groups and to address nutrition disparities that lead to chronic disease and missed opportunities to reduce these illnesses.

In our [July 15 submission](#), CRN reminded the Conference that expanding access to dietary supplements for low-income and underserved populations is critical to creating a healthy and nourished nation. CRN offered the following recommendations to help achieve the Conference’s proposed pillars:

- Include multivitamins/mineral supplements in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Plan (SNAP) benefits. Expanding SNAP benefits to include supplements will go a long

¹ The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing more than 200 dietary supplement and functional food manufacturers, ingredient suppliers, and companies providing services to those manufacturers and suppliers. In addition to complying with a host of federal and state regulations governing dietary supplements and food in the areas of manufacturing, marketing, quality control and safety, our manufacturer and supplier members also agree to adhere to additional voluntary guidelines as well as to CRN’s Code of Ethics. For more information, visit www.crnusa.org. Follow us on Twitter [@CRN_Supplements](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

way toward closing the nutrition gaps. Acknowledging existing research that demonstrates low-income and food-insecure adults are at greater risk of nutrient shortfalls, CRN believes amending the SNAP program to allow beneficiaries the opportunity to purchase multivitamin/mineral supplements (which is currently prohibited) would help address the socioeconomic nutritional gap and help achieve improved food access and affordability. This is particularly timely as Congress turns its attention to the Farm Bill's 2023 reauthorization. The upcoming legislation offers the opportunity to prioritize nutrition, thus adopting this recommendation would be a big step toward improving public health.

- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to regularly update Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) and establish new DRIs for nutrients and bioactives as needed. CRN's call to ensure sufficient resources to update DRI intakes reflects the reality that, with limited exceptions for sodium and potassium which were updated in 2019, the DRIs have not been updated for at least the past 15 to 20 years despite a proliferation of research that highlights the role of nutrition in strengthening immunity, maintaining cognitive function and active lifestyles, and reducing chronic disease risk. CRN called for regular updates to existing DRIs, and establishing new ones, to integrate nutrition and health by giving researchers, policy makers, and healthcare providers up-to-date information on nutrients and bioactives in order to develop new programs and recommendations.
- Develop initiatives to educate about the relationship between nutrition and better health as well as the role dietary supplements can play in filling nutrient gaps. If consumers are unaware of the relationship between their diets and their health, they don't appreciate the immediacy of eating healthy. Better information about the role nutrition plays for maintaining a healthy lifestyle is critical to fostering healthier diets. So, in addition to access to a variety of nutritious foods that deliver these nutrients, and supplements to fill in nutritional gaps, consumers need access to nutrition education that explains the importance of eating a healthy diet and explains the negative health consequences from failing to meet the body's nutritional needs.
- Attention to private sector initiatives/partnerships to increase nutrition access. Our previous submission to the Conference highlighted private sector initiatives to improve nutrition access by working with non-profit organizations that serve low-income and food-insecure individuals and families. To broaden the dietary supplement industry's efforts, CRN's *Act for Access* program has challenged its members to volunteer or donate to non-profits between June and September, and has demonstrated success with broad participation from members.

Expanding access to supplements including vitamins, multivitamins and minerals for low-income and underserved populations is critical if we want to be a healthy and nourished nation. While the best way to get all the recommended daily nutrients is to eat a well-balanced diet, that is not always possible, especially for low-income populations.

Eliminating hunger is an important and necessary objective, but we want nutrition to be an equally vital part of the equation. If we can properly feed and nourish our most vulnerable Americans, then we have a real opportunity to prevent, and possibly eliminate, some of the chronic diseases that have afflicted us for many years. In turn, we may see a change in how we approach our overall healthcare system.

Sincerely yours,



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