A Letter from Heidi Baskfield

In Colorado, one in six households with children do not have reliable access to food. Food is medicine and children need access to healthy, nutritious foods so they can grow, learn, and thrive. In 2017, team members from the Child Health Advocacy Institute, Government Affairs, Human Resources, Clinical Nutrition, and General Pediatrics, came together to form the Children’s Hospital Colorado Food Security Council (FSC). Its goal is by 2023, to increase access to timely, nutritious, and affordable food with the goal of improving food security and diet quality for 90% of Colorado’s households with children. Through hospital-based programming, external partnerships, and advocacy, we are collaborating to make this vision a reality for families seeking care here at Children’s and those in communities across the state. This work is critical as it is part of the Children’s Hospital Colorado population health strategy that was launched in 2015.

We are excited to share with you the work and accomplishments of the FSC in the past year. 2018 was a fulfilling year that saw our organization partner with King Soopers, Aurora Public Schools, the Colorado chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to improve access to nutritious food for Colorado families. We officially opened the Healthy Roots Community Garden, and successfully advocate for increased access to free and reduced school lunches for kids in need in our state. With your continued support and partnership, we will continue to address and put an end to hunger for children and families in our communities.

HEIDI BASKFIELD
VP, Population Health and Advocacy
Food Security Council: A Roadmap to End Child Hunger

Vision: By 2023, at least 90% of Colorado’s vulnerable children will have access to timely, quality and affordable food that meets their health needs.

Eligible Children’s Colorado team members are enrolled in SNAP and WIC. All Children’s Colorado team members possess knowledge and skills needed to practice healthy eating behaviors.

Family friendly practices exist around timely access to healthy and affordable food for Children’s Colorado team members.

Children’s Colorado leadership understands the impacts of hunger on health outcomes and Children’s Colorado’s role in addressing hunger for team members, patients and community members.

All relevant Children’s Colorado clinics use the psychosocial screen to screen patients for food insecurity.

Children’s Colorado has a community garden and/or food pharmacy on campus for patients to conveniently access healthy foods.

Community health liaisons connect all low-income patients to one or more resources enabling healthy food access.

An ICD-10 code/diagnosis code for food insecurity screening incorporated in EPIC.

Children’s Colorado is a Summer Food Service Program site.

Alignement with the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger

In 2017, the Colorado Health Foundation invested in the process of over 35 stakeholders, either working to end hunger or living with hunger, coming together over several months to create a blueprint to achieve the goal of a hunger-free Colorado. The blueprint is a call to action for a broad range of stakeholders to continue working on this solvable issue. Children’s Hospital Colorado participated on the blueprint steering committee, and given the significant overlap between our strategic roadmap and the blueprint, we aim to work in alignment with all of the goals outlined in the Blueprint to End Hunger.

Vision: All Coloradans have access to affordable and healthy food in their communities

Goal 1
Increase public understanding and awareness that solving hunger is vital to the health and well-being of all individuals and families, the Colorado economy and every local community.

Goal 2
Increase the number of Coloradans who can access affordable, nutritious food in their communities.

Goal 3
Increase the number of Coloradans who can access food assistance and nutritious food through community-based organizations.

Goal 4
Maximize SNAP and WIC enrollment to propel Colorado to become a leading state for enrollment in these health and nutrition benefits.

Goal 5
Maximize participation in Federal Child Nutrition programs, moving Colorado to become a national leader in delivery of these vital programs.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food security means having “access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.”

Eating healthy foods helps kids develop physically, achieve academically and experience better behavioral health. Federal food assistance programs are critical in alleviating hunger. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—or food stamp—and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participation early in life lowers childhood obesity and decreases future risk of developing diabetes and heart disease, two leading causes of mortality in Colorado.

While these programs are critical, Colorado lags in enrollment when compared to the rest of the U.S. Colorado ranks 44th lowest in SNAP enrollment, meaning more than 320,000 Coloradans need help but aren’t getting it. The state ranks 48th lowest for enrollment in WIC.

74% of SNAP enrollees in Colorado are families with children

ONE IN SIX

Colorado kids may not always know when or where they will get their next meal.

1 The primary focus of the Food Security Council over the next five years will be vulnerable children who face unique challenges that put healthy food out of reach. This includes children of low-income parents and guardians, immigrants and refugees, those who reside in rural communities of Colorado, children who are disabled and those representing communities of color.

2 Low-income means Children’s Colorado patient who qualify for public assistance including but not limited to Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANF, Food Stamps or school lunch and breakfast and WIC. Low-income could also include patients who make slightly too much to qualify for Federal poverty assistance programs, yet still experience great difficulty making ends meet.

3 Behavioral health clinicians in schools who are trained in using a tool designed to screen for hunger as part of routine care. If a patient is identified as food insecure, they are referred to the school’s food insecurity clinic for more comprehensive services.

4 Edible school gardens that provide access to fresh produce.

5 Adequate funding for discretionary programs, e.g., WIC, means that annual spending remains at a high enough level to maximize participation in the program. Adequate funding for mandatory programs, e.g., SNAP; child nutrition programs, means that funding levels are protected and not reduced in the event of an economic recession. Inadequate funding reduces access to healthy foods and exacerbates poverty in the state.

6 A policy leader on child nutrition. Children’s Colorado leads in or leads federal, state and in some cases local policy initiatives that improve access to healthy food for Colorado youth.
**What is Food Insecurity?**

Food insecurity is defined as limited or uncertain access to food to maintain an active, healthy life. A household may be food insecure and unable to access nutritionally adequate and safe foods due to lack of money or other social resources. Food insecurity results in involuntary cutting back on meals or food portions and is also known as “at risk of hunger.” There is a range of severity of food insecurity.

- **HIGH**
  - Access at all time to enough food for an active, healthy life
  - No problems or anxiety about accessing food

- **MARGINAL**
  - Problems at times, or anxiety about, accessing enough food
  - Quality, variety and quantity of food intake are not substantially reduced

- **LOW**
  - Reduced quality, variety and desirability of food intake
  - Quality and normal eating patterns are not substantially disrupted

- **VERY LOW**
  - Lack of money and other resources for food
  - Disrupted eating patterns and reduced quality (skipping meals)

**How is Food Insecurity Identified?**

Many hospitals and health systems throughout the country are now including food insecurity screening as part of their standard patient intake process. Screening for FI are currently being done in several Children’s Colorado departments and include the following two questions:

- (A) Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
- (B) Within the past months, the food bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.

Families who screen positive for food insecurity are then referred to our community partner, Hunger Free Colorado, for food assistance and navigation.

**2018 Child Health Clinic food insecurity screening**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient Count</td>
<td>8,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Psychosocial Screens</td>
<td>13,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pos All</td>
<td>2,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pos Food A or B</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pos Food A</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pos Food B</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2018 Hunger Free Colorado referrals**

| 613 | Total referrals received Hunger Free Colorado from Children’s Colorado |

| 430 | Total number of clients contacted by Hunger Free Colorado |

**Food Insecurity in our community**

1 in 10

Coloradoans (10.35%) lack access to nutrition food

1 in 6

Colorado kids (16%) may not always know when or where they will get their next meal

200K+

Individuals are food insecure in Adams, Arapahoe, and Denver counties

Federal food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) are the most effective way to reduce hunger and supplement the food budgets of low-income families. But Colorado has some of the lowest enrollment rates in the country.

WIC: 100,000 Coloradans eligible but not enrolled

SNAP: 322,600 Coloradans eligible but not enrolled

**What is a food desert?**

Geographic areas that lack reasonable access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers. A “low-access community” is at least 500 people and/or at least 33% of the census tract’s population must reside more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (for rural census tracts, the distance is more than 10 miles). (Source: USDA)

Northwest Aurora is a USDA designated food desert.

**Team members**

Survey results from the 2018 Annual employee wellness survey:

In the last 12 months: “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.”

- Often true: 2%
- Sometimes true: 11%
- Never true: 87%

In the last 12 months: “The food that we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.”

- Often true: 3%
- Sometimes true: 9%
- Never true: 88%

“I see families who are hungry or can’t afford to buy food and it hurts my heart. I’ve been there in life and I can’t sit and watch families go hungry. I’ll buy food for anyone I can tell can’t afford enough.”

TEQUILA GURLEY

Senior Cook
2018 Programming and Initiatives

Many of Children’s Hospital Colorado's food security efforts have been generously supported by ongoing funding from King Soopers. As a proud partner of Children’s Colorado for more than 40 years, King Soopers partnered with the hospital to support the work the Food Security Council was leading. CHCO’s effort to eliminate hunger in the pediatric community aligned perfectly with King Soopers Zero Hunger Zero Waste program, aimed at improving the health of millions of Americans by making balanced meals more readily available.

A huge thank you to our partner King Soopers!

- Partnered with Copia to redistribute excess food from our cafeteria to local non-profits in need. In 2018 we donated over 4,000 lb of food or approximately 3,400 meals.
- We provided over 100 King Soopers giftcards, valued at over $7,000 to family's in critical need and around the holidays.
- Our Patient Family & Community Navigators were able to provide emergency food bags to 50 families throughout the Child Health Clinic.
- Children’s Colorado was on the steering comitte and various workgroups for development Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger.
- Began program planning on the Healthy Roots Food Clinic to be opened in Fall of 2019 in the Child Health Pavilion.
- Launched the new, 3,000 square foot Healthy Roots Community Garden.

Food security leads to:

- Reduced obesity, diabetes and malnutrition
- Lower risk for heart disease & high blood pressure
- Lower levels of stress
- Decreased depression
- Significantly lower rates of suicide in adolescents
- Decreased behavioral problems in youth

Food Recovery

In 2018, Children’s Hospital Colorado partnered with Copia, food recovery experts whose technology allowed CHCO to safely donate their excess food, access enhanced tax deductions, and receive powerful data to inform food purchasing decisions. The donated food was then redistributed to local human service providers — such as the Aurora Day Resource Center — totaling over 3400 meals. Through these efforts, CHCO has been able to serve undererved and food-insecure populations in our community beyond patients and families. In 2019, local non-profit We Don't Waste will be our new partner in redistribution of excess food, tapping into their expertise on where meals can most efficiently be delivered to people in need.

Members of the Food Security Council represented Children’s on a number of community and state initiatives including:

- CD Food Systems Advisory Council
- Denver SNAP Task Force
- Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council
- Colorado Food & Health Collaborative
- Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger Initiative

Policy Milestones

In 2018, Children’s Colorado fought for the passage of public policies that ensure healthy food is within reach of our youngest Coloradans and their families. Throughout the course of year, we advocated for a federal Farm Bill reauthorization that preserves access to vital food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Over 200 of our Child Health Champions advocates and millions of individuals nationwide weighed in to protect children and families in the Farm Bill.

We spoke with members of Congress and their staff, including at a SNAP roundtable with Congresswoman DeGette and other health-focused partners. We pushed out alerts on the legislation to our network through social media, and discussed with Children’s Colorado providers and other team members SNAP and the harmful changes proposed in early versions of the bill.

We met with the pediatric residency program at Children’s Hospital Colorado to encourage our pediatricians-in-training to submit letters to the editor of their local papers on the Farm Bill. Additionally, we were able to secure an op-ed in the Sunday Denver Post, co-authored by two pediatricians, one of whom practices at Children’s Hospital Colorado, to urge the Colorado congressional delegation to support a Farm Bill that preserves SNAP. Our hard work was part of a nationwide surge of advocacy that paid off in the midst of partisan divide, gridlock and seeming chaos with a partial federal government shutdown just in time for the holidays, when President Trump signed into law a Farm Bill that passed with strong bipartisan support in both the U.S. House and Senate.

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During the 2018 state legislative session, we joined a coalition of anti-hunger organizations to support Senate Bill 13, which expands the state coverage for free lunches through the National School Lunch Program for middle school students. SB13 passed both houses of the legislature and was signed into law by then-Governor Hickenlooper. We also lobbied for additional SNAP program and quality assurance staff in the state human services department, to build upon efforts to provide timely and accurate program benefits to Coloradans.

Last spring, we collaborated with partners involved in the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger initiative to pass a Colorado State Board of Human Services rule change. One of our pediatricians testified before the state human services board in support of the change to increase the SNAP income eligibility threshold for all Coloradans to 200% of the federal poverty level. This change protects children and low-income families from losing SNAP benefits by being slightly over the previous income eligibility threshold, with expanded access to these critical benefits for other families.
Healthy Roots Garden & Farm Cart

In September of 2018 the Healthy Roots Garden at Children’s Hospital Colorado (CHCO) debuted, prominently featured adjacent to the main entrance. The 3000 square feet of growing space is divided into 22 raised beds, primarily serving programmatic purposes for various clinics and departments, and a micro-farm plot that will be more focused on high-yield production. The primary destination of the produce will be the mobile, SNAP-accessible Healthy Roots Farm Cart that will begin operation in the spring of 2019. This mobile market will operate in high-traffic locations where it will be available to all patients, families, staff, and community members on a weekly basis. Double-Up Bucks, our statewide initiative to double SNAP recipients’ produce buying power, will also be available.

The garden was the result of persistent advocacy by the CHCO Food Security Council, a group of dedicated staff who saw the value of connecting all of their patients and families directly with nutritious, whole foods. Production and programming will be managed by a combination of volunteers and staff, and various community partners will collaborate to provide increased education and opportunities. Children’s Hospital Colorado is hoping to build on the momentum of the Healthy Roots Garden in 2018, as well as the planned launch of the Farm Cart, to further increase capacity to serve their food-insecure population. We hope to show a healthcare anchor institution can truly help their patients and families in ways beyond the traditional approaches, educating and providing the basis for food as medicine.

The Seasons
Eating Through
Spring
Summer
Fall
Winter

HEALTH BENEFITS
VEGETABLES HARVESTED

**HEALTH BENEFITS**

- **Phytochemicals**: Protect against many kinds of damage.
- **Beta-carotene**: Converts to Vitamin A and supports eye health.
- **Folate**: Important for wound closing and healing after an injury.
- **Vitamin C**: Supports the immune system and prevents illness.
- **Lycopene**: Supports heart health by improving blood flow in the body.
- **Anthocyanins**: Protect against the development of cancer.
- **Sulfurophane**: A nutrient which may help prevent cancer.

**HEALTH BENEFITS**

- **Beets**: Naturally-occurring nitrates, which are a nutrient that benefits heart health.
- **Winter squash and pumpkins**: Yellows or oranges, get their color from beta-carotene, which converts to Vitamin A and supports eye health.
- **Broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower**: Contain sulforaphane, a nutrient which may help prevent cancer.
- **Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, summer squash (zucchini and yellow squash), green beans, strawberries, blueberries: Contain 

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**Eating Through The Seasons**

**Spring**

- **Asparagus**, spinach, peas:
- **Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, summer squash (zucchini and yellow squash), green beans, strawberries, blueberries:

**Summer**

- **Watermelon**, cantaloupe, water lettuce, pineapple:
- **Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, summer squash (zucchini and yellow squash), green beans, strawberries, blueberries:

**Fall**

- **Butternut squash**, sweet potatoes, kale:
- **Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, summer squash (zucchini and yellow squash), green beans, strawberries, blueberries:

**Winter**

- **Pomegranate**, oranges, brussels sprouts, cherries:
- **Tomatoes**, peppers, eggplant, summer squash (zucchini and yellow squash), green beans, strawberries, blueberries:

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**HEALTH BENEFITS**

**VEGETABLES HARVESTED**

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**Welcome to VEGGIE TOWN**

This space is dedicated to cultivating high-yield crops that will be distributed through community-based food insecurity programs.

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The Healthy Roots Garden is a project in collaboration with the Healthy Roots Garden & Farm Cart. This space is dedicated to cultivating high-yield crops that will be distributed through community-based food insecurity programs.