



Contact:
Rachel Bonilla
951-359-4757 ext.117 (office)
rbonilla@feedingamericaie.org (email)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Report Finds Connecting Food Banks to Health Care Partners Essential to Fighting Food Insecurity

Riverside, CA – July 8th, 2026 – The largest national Food as Medicine 3.0 (FAM3) evaluation of its kind—funded by Anthem Blue Cross Foundation and evaluated by the Center for Nutrition & Health Impact—finds that food bank-health care partnerships can improve food security, reduce hospitalizations, and deliver measurable health gains for neighbors facing hunger.

“FARSB’s FoodRx program included in this report cements the need for better nutrition in food assistance and showcases that providing proper food for our communities is essential to better overall health,” says Vanesa Rangel-Mercado, Interim CEO at FARSB. “Our neighbors deserve the food they need to be healthy, and this showcases the need for this model on a larger scale.”

The FAM3 program evaluation demonstrated that consistent access to nutritious food alongside health care support can improve nutrition and health-related outcomes. Across the FAM3 initiative, hospitalizations fell by 14% and emergency department visit rates fell by 11%, demonstrating that consistent, medically supportive food reduced costly health care encounters for participants and health systems alike, while providing stability for households—reflected in a nearly 7 percentage point increase in food security, a 47% relative increase.

Together with CareMore Health, Loma Linda VA Hospital, Riverside University Health System (RUHS), and Riverside Free Clinic (RFC), FARSB screens neighbors for food insecurity and provides referrals to nutritious meals tailored to chronic disease management through the FoodRx program, along with nutrition education for long-term health.

"I am so honored to be leading the nutrition program at [RFC] where we serve about 30 patients at each clinic, offered twice a month, providing them with nutrition counseling, workshops, and resources, which include information about other food pantries and the FoodRx boxes," said Kianna Le, FoodRx Partner at RFC.

This report reinforced that food banks are trusted community hubs, uniquely positioned to connect neighbors facing hunger and the health care system. Through a whole-person care model that is adaptable, replicable, and community-rooted, food banks and healthcare partners screen neighbors for food insecurity, provide referrals to nutritious meals provided by food banks, and deliver wraparound resources to support better health for the whole family.

FAM3 findings arrive at a critical moment. Policymakers, health systems, and insurers increasingly recognize food security as both a public health and economic concern—and this

initiative offers some of the strongest evidence yet that community-based food and health programs deliver meaningful results at scale.

Read the full findings from the largest national Food as Medicine evaluation of its kind: [FAM3 FA Cumulative Report](#)

To learn more about FARSB, visit www.FeedingIE.org

Photo Credit: Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino

About Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino

Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino (FARSB) is leading the fight against hunger in the Inland Empire by providing food access, emergency relief, education, and advocacy to families in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. FARSB opened in 1980 as Survive Food Bank in response to the increasing concern about the dual problems of hunger and food waste in the Inland Empire. Today, FARSB is the primary food source for nearly 250 local nonprofit organizations, distributing over 3.3 million pounds of food monthly to emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, high-need elementary schools, senior centers, after-school programs, and more. With the help of these community partners, they make up the largest hunger-relief organization serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, ultimately making food security a reality for over one million households every year. Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino proudly holds the 2026 Guide Star Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of transparency achievable through Guide Star. For more information, visit <http://www.FeedingIE.org>

About Anthem Blue Cross Foundation

The Anthem Blue Cross Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Association, is a philanthropic arm of the Elevance Health Foundation. The Foundation works to improve the health of the socially vulnerable through partnerships and programs in our communities with an emphasis on maternal-infant health; behavioral health; and food as medicine. Additionally, the Foundation also responds to disasters when our communities need us the most. ®ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross names and symbol are registered marks of the Blue Cross Association. To learn more about the Anthem Blue Cross Foundation and the Elevance Health Foundation, please visit www.elevancehealth.foundation and its blog at www.medium.com/elevancehealthfoundation.

About Feeding America®

Rooted in the voices of neighbors facing hunger, Feeding America unites the country to ensure everyone has access to food and a thriving future. We support tens of millions of people as part of a nationwide network of 250+ food banks, 20+ statewide food bank associations, 10+ regional co-ops and 60,000+ agency partners, food pantries and meal programs. Powered by leaders and volunteers embedded in local communities, we are one of the nation's most effective food distribution systems to drive immediate impact today—and a catalyst for long-term change through advocating for legislation that improves food security and work to address its factors. We partner with people experiencing food insecurity, policymakers, organizations and supporters, acting united with unwavering commitment to provide nourishing food and work to end hunger at its roots so everyone can live fuller, healthier lives.

Visit FeedingAmerica.org to learn more.

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