

2013 State Legislative Agenda

Each year CFPA develops a state legislative agenda focused on improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food.

Foundations for Healthy Nutrition in Child Care

Despite research indicating that child care provider training has the greatest impact on the quality of child care programs, California's licensing laws do not require providers to undergo any nutrition training. With nearly 25% of preschool-aged children overweight or obese, many of California's youngest residents face a lifetime of health challenges (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, cancer). Conversely, children who practice healthy eating habits during the first five years of life are more likely to extend those habits into adulthood. The Institute of Medicine recently underscored the need for policy-driven, systematic change to effectively reverse obesity trends; the child care environment presents an opportunity to impact the health of California's young children. With more than 45,000 licensed child care facilities in California serving over one-million children, child care providers are uniquely positioned to help ensure that young children develop healthy eating habits early.

Action: Amend child care licensing laws to increase the required hours of preventive health practices training in order to include one hour on childhood nutrition.

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Strengthening the Connection between CalFresh and Medi-Cal

The nutrition benefits provided by CalFresh play a critical role in supporting overall health. In an effort to further the connection between nutrition and health, the link between CalFresh and other health benefits, such as Medi-Cal, should be made explicit. Moreover, through the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, millions of low-income Californians will soon be newly eligible for Medi-Cal. There is no better time to connect low-income Californians with a comprehensive package of benefits that includes CalFresh and can truly support overall health.

Many individuals currently enrolled in Medi-Cal are unaware that their household might be eligible for CalFresh. In addition, some households with a Medi-Cal recipient are net-income eligible for CalFresh, but have a gross-income above the current limit. As a result, the CalFresh gross-income test is preventing otherwise eligible households with high needs and high expenses, such as child care costs, from accessing these benefits.

Action: Remove a barrier to CalFresh for households with a Medi-Cal recipient (with income up to 200% FPL) by making these households categorically eligible for CalFresh, thereby removing the CalFresh gross-income test. While the net-income test would still apply, this change would likely boost CalFresh participation, solidify the connection between nutrition and health, and draw significant federal dollars into local economies.

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