**Policy and environmental approaches to improve health among low-income populations in the United States: Making the Case for Financial Incentives**

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**Abstract**

Dietary patterns that include fruits and vegetables greatly reduce the risk for chronic disease. However, fruit and vegetable intake in the United States is far below recommended levels for all Americans. This is exacerbated among low-income populations where systemic inequities exist, leading to stark health disparities. Subsequently, low-income populations are less likely to meet recommended levels of fruit and vegetable intake, report higher rates of food insecurity and hunger, and experience higher rates of chronic diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some types of cancer.

Affordability and accessibility are common barriers to fruit and vegetable purchases and intake among low-income populations. As a result, financial incentives for fruits and vegetables are a viable policy lever to support the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income populations in the United States. Specifically, the United States Department of Agriculture’s Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) is the largest source of federal funding to date to support financial incentives for fruits and vegetables through competitive grants to organizations throughout the United States.

This presentation will provide an overview of GusNIP, including describing the two main types of GusNIP awards (e.g., nutrition incentive and produce prescription programs), as well as some main fundings to date. The evidence is promising that financial incentives for fruits and vegetables increase fruit and vegetable intake, support food security, and positively influence health outcomes in the United States. Further, these programs have the potential to be adapted and implemented in other countries, where they could be used in conjunction with other policy, systems and environmental approaches to help promote food and nutrition security, especially among the most vulnerable populations.