

Health & Nutrition

Tips For Finding Good Nutrition

(NAPS)—According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one out of every eight U.S. households experiences food insecurity. Access to healthy food is an important factor in your health, and for millions of Americans, it remains elusive.

“An inability to access healthy food, and the important nutrients they contain, can cause both immediate and long-term health problems, especially for children. For many Americans of lesser means, this problem can stem from a lack of healthy food sources in their neighborhood and means of transportation to access sources in other communities,” said Dr. Andrea Gelzer, senior vice president of medical affairs for AmeriHealth Caritas, a national leader in Medicaid managed care and other health care solutions for those most in need. “As a Medicaid managed care organization (MCO), we are placing an increasing emphasis on helping our members find and access sources of fresh produce, grains and other nutritious foods.”

Resources that Americans most in need can turn to for finding and obtaining healthy food include:

Grocery Store Programs

An increasing number of grocery stores have nutritionists on staff. They meet with customers, explain how to make their diets healthier, and even teach them how to find healthy foods. Some grocery stores also offer cooking demonstrations. Some supermarket companies specialize in offering products, programs and services that better meet the needs of people with limited financial resources. At the very least, large grocery stores offer a much wider variety of fresh produce, whole grains and other healthy foods than are often available in small neighborhood stores.

Many low-income communities lack such grocery stores, and people without their own transportation may have difficulty accessing healthy food sources. Medicaid enrollees who are eligible for



There are many ways to get any help you need to be sure you have enough nutritious food.

home and community-based services (HCBS) can get transportation for non-medical services such as grocery shopping. Senior citizens may also be able to access paratransit services. Medicaid enrollees who are covered by a managed care plan but don't qualify for HCBS or senior citizen services can check with their health plan to see what resources might be available.

Organizations in the Community

If your challenge is less about finding sources of healthy food than getting to them, there are options that can help you shop for groceries, or even do it completely on your behalf. There are also food banks, some of which have off-site distributions, even in rural areas. If you are a senior citizen, you can find out about them by contacting your area agency on aging.

Look for Faith-Based Groups

Religious institutions of all faiths generally have it in their mission to provide aid to those in need. Some organize food drives or even prepare meals for the neediest. They may also help find other organizations that provide such services.

AmeriHealth Caritas is part of the Independence Health Group in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. AmeriHealth Caritas is one of the nation's leaders in health care solutions for those most in need.

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For further information, visit www.amerihealthcaritas.com.