



Statement on Upcoming Lapse in SNAP Funding

October 24, 2025

Children's HealthWatch urges immediate action by federal and state leaders to prevent a [dangerous lapse](#) in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits on Nov. 1. Failing to disburse SNAP benefits for the month of November would take food off the tables of nearly 42 million people, including babies, toddlers, and pregnant and postpartum people. As pediatric providers on the front lines of care, we are sounding the alarm. In our clinics and emergency departments, we see what happens when SNAP benefits are cut or families lose access to SNAP. Even in the short term, they [are significantly more likely to](#) face household and child food insecurity and fair or poor caregiver and child health. These are not just statistics—they are the children in our exam rooms.

Not only would failing to deliver SNAP benefits threaten the health of young children and their families, but it is also unprecedented. Never in the sixty-year history of SNAP has the USDA refused to use the contingency funds it holds ([more than \\$5 billion](#)) to disperse monthly SNAP benefits.

We call for urgent, coordinated action on three fronts:

Federal administrative action

The Administration and USDA should deploy all available contingency funds and emergency mechanisms to prevent any interruption in monthly benefits. USDA has historically used carryover balances and reserve authorities when Congress has not yet acted; in fact, it is [legally obligated to do so](#). USDA has more than \$5 billion in contingency funds to support the costs of SNAP, and it must disperse them to states immediately.

Congressional pressure on the Administration

Members of Congress in both parties must act now to send an unambiguous directive to USDA and the Administration: do not allow [nearly 42 million](#) people to go hungry. Congress should publicly and directly urge executive action to bridge funding and, in parallel, move swiftly to reopen the government to sustain uninterrupted SNAP benefits and protect programs that help families meet their basic needs.

State-level protection if federal action lags

If federal inaction continues, states must prepare to use their “rainy day” reserves or other emergency authorities to temporarily bridge SNAP operations. States already use

these budget stabilization funds to shore up essential services during crises; preventing a sharp food insecurity shock for millions of families—with significant downstream health and economic consequences—fits squarely within their purpose.

Decades of research, [including our own](#), demonstrate that when families lose access to adequate nutrition, the health and development of young children is harmed—**within days and weeks**, not months or years. There is no “pause” button for nutrition in the lives of infants and toddlers.

SNAP is the largest and most effective tool we have to address food insecurity in this country. We cannot rely on the charitable food system to fill these gaps: for every meal a food bank provides, SNAP provides nine. We urge state and federal leaders and the USDA to act before Nov. 1 to ensure SNAP benefits continue without interruption. The cost of inaction is clear: a wave of poor health and deeper hardship for children and their families.

About Children’s HealthWatch: Founded in 1998, Children’s HealthWatch is a nonpartisan network of pediatricians, public health researchers, and children’s health and policy experts committed to improving children’s health in America. The network collects real-time data in urban hospitals across the country on infants and toddlers from families facing economic hardship, then analyzes and shares its findings with academics, legislators, and the public.