

# Hunger VitalSign™

## Hunger Vital Sign™ National Community of Practice

### About the Hunger Vital Sign™ National Community of Practice (CoP)

Co-convened by Children's HealthWatch and Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), the CoP works to facilitate conversations and collective action among a wide-range of stakeholders interested in addressing food insecurity through a health care lens. The group seeks to identify research on the connections between food insecurity and health; promote the use of the Hunger Vital Sign™ to screen for food insecurity; and champion effective interventions to address food insecurity both at the practice and policy level. The group includes more than 100 physicians, public health researchers, anti-hunger agencies and advocates, health care professionals, and policy experts.

### Goals and purpose

The overarching goal and purpose of the CoP is to rapidly share leading best practices and data on food insecurity screening/intervention activities and strategies to and scale what works. Quarterly information-sharing virtual meetings facilitate a research forum and a venue where multiple stakeholders gather to disseminate leading practices, lessons learned, and most importantly, collaborate in sub-groups to inform and influence large-scale policy and practice change resulting in evidence-based innovations to alleviate food insecurity and improve population health outcomes.

### What makes us unique?

We are first and foremost a policy change group. Operating in the fast moving and quickly changing field of organizations responding to patients' health related social needs, we are driven to shape policy at the practice, local, state and federal level. Our efforts are mainly focused on health care sector policy (e.g., state-level Medicaid redesign, medical informatics/coding policies) and to a lesser extent on federal legislative policy (federal nutrition programs).

### Current Priorities

- Research and best practices identification and dissemination
- Engage policymakers/key stakeholders and inform large-scale policy and practice change
  - CMS AHC Model
  - State Medicaid reform (OR, MA, VT)
  - Health systems, ACOs, etc.
- Engage professional groups
  - AAP, AAFP, AMA, AHA, AARP, etc.
- EHR and coding
  - Practitioner how-to-guide on coding SDOH
  - Establishing SDOH codes (ICD11, SNOMED CT, CPT II, LOINC)
  - Engage EHR stakeholders (Epic, OCHIN, Athena, etc.)
- Role of technology in FI interventions
  - Practitioner guide to tech-based intervention tools (NowPow, Aunt Bertha, etc.)
- Support efforts to strengthen and improve the federal nutrition programs

### Future Priorities

- Engage state/federal agencies, leading health care organizations, and funders to direct activity and investment in the CoP to scale impact of evidence-based innovations to alleviate food insecurity and improve population health outcomes
- Issue guidance on baseline metrics and outcomes related to FI screen & intervene efforts
- Issue guidance on baseline intervention strategies related to FI screen & intervene efforts
- CoP survey to assess and inform future refinement and priorities of the CoP in a fast-paced changing environment

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## A brief history of the Hunger Vital Sign™ and the Hunger Vital Sign™ National Community of Practice (CoP)

- 2010
- Two-item food insecurity screening tool validated and published in Pediatrics article (Hager et al. 2010)
- 2010-present
- Hundreds of health care practitioners from small practices to large health care systems adopt and implement the 2-item food insecurity screening tool to identify and alleviate food insecurity among patient populations
  - Hunger Vital Sign™ Pediatrics article (Hager et al. 2010) cited in 100+ peer-reviewed journal articles
- 2014
- Children's HealthWatch brands the validated 2-item food insecurity screening tool as the Hunger Vital Sign™ and publishes a policy brief on its current use and potential
- 2015
- American Academy of Pediatrics issues a policy statement recommending all pediatricians screen patients and families for food insecurity using the Hunger Vital Sign™ and intervene to address food insecurity concerns
  - The Hunger Vital Sign™ validated for use in adolescent populations
  - Hunger Vital Sign™ selected as SEEK food insecurity screening tool of choice
- 2016
- Children's HealthWatch and FRAC co-convene the Hunger Vital Sign™ National Community of Practice (CoP) at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference – the CoP is born
  - Epic incorporates the Hunger Vital Sign™ into their foundation EHR product for all Epic users
  - OCHIN incorporates the Hunger Vital Sign™ into their EHR product
  - Oregon Medicaid selects the Hunger Vital Sign™ as a performance improvement measure in Oregon
  - Children's HealthWatch publishes a Hunger Vital Sign™ Best Practices white paper and two case studies
- 2017
- FRAC and AAP release a Hunger Vital Sign™ Toolkit for practitioners
  - FRAC and AARP develop a free course (approved for 1 CME) for health practitioners on addressing food insecurity among older adults
  - Children's HealthWatch received funding from Boston Public Health Commission and CDC to implement a Hunger Vital Sign™ Boston Community of Practice to provide peer-learning and technical assistance to CHCs in MA engaged in FI screening and intervention
  - CMS/CMMI Accountable Health Communities Model selects the Hunger Vital Sign™ as food insecurity screening tool of choice
  - Hunger Vital Sign™ validated for use in adult populations (Gunderson et al. 2017)
  - AMA adopts Hunger Vital Sign™ policy resolution for further study and consideration
  - AAFP NY and Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students adopt a policy resolution on food insecurity—proceed to national congress
  - University of Vermont Medical Center/Vermont Department of Health Vermont Child Health Improvement Program selects the Hunger Vital Sign™ for statewide QI project
  - Hunger Vital Sign™ selected as the FI screening tool of choice among a variety of organizations (Help me Grow/211, NowPow, SCHWA, Boston Public Health Commission, Camden Coalition, etc.)
  - VT Medicaid considering reimbursing health care providers for FI and HI screening
  - MA ACOs considering adoption of the Hunger Vital Sign™ among health related social needs screening tools
  - Food insecurity SNOMED CT code is preliminarily approved