



atherosclerosis, about 1 in 7 reported being food insecure compared with 9.1% among those without atherosclerosis.<sup>4</sup>

Food insecurity is linked to a greater estimated annual healthcare costs of \$1,863 per person, with higher costs among food insecure individuals with chronic conditions like hypertension, stroke, arthritis, and diabetes.<sup>5</sup> The impact of food insecurity on health and health care costs can increase with age. Costs associated with hypertension, stroke, arthritis, and diabetes have been found to be higher for food-insecure older adults.<sup>6</sup> Finally, food-insecure seniors were 2.33 times more likely to report being in fair or poor health, compared to food-secure seniors.<sup>7</sup>

The Council agrees with the following statements as they relate to the passage of SB 365:

- The establishment and retention of small businesses and other food-related enterprises that provide fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods can support more healthy food environments and address food security. The Council encourages recipients of these funds to implement The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 when purchasing foods.<sup>8</sup> The Council also encourages recipients to work with nutrition education programs like SNAP-Ed (Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education) and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) to help customers understand how to incorporate healthy foods into the diet.
- SB 365 increases the allowed loan amount to \$100,000, permits loans for operation and equipment costs, and expands the program to both urban and rural communities. These changes represent powerful new incentives for healthy, affordable food access in Maryland communities now designated as food deserts.
- This legislation's loan forgiveness provisions, available only if a business remains in the same location for five years, will help sustain Maryland communities' food security through current and future economic difficulties.

The Council respectfully urges this Committee to approve SB 365 as a critical public health measure to help reduce food insecurity for people living with chronic disease in Maryland. This is especially critical during the time of a pandemic and economic challenges.

Sincerely,



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<sup>4</sup> Mahajan, P, Grandhi, GR, Elizondo JV, Acquah I, Yahya T, Virani SS, DeBakey, ME, Blankstein R, Blaha MJ, Cainzos-Achirica M, Nasir K. 2438 - Prevalence and Sociodemographic Determinants of Food Insecurity Among Adults with Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease in the United States. Presentation. 2020 American Heart Association Scientific Sessions. 2020 Nov 13.

[https://www.abstractsonline.com/pp8/?ga=2.163795903.1679679606.1602008177-545131344.1565642004&gac=1.126052095.1601320366.CjwKCAjw5Kv7BRBSEiwAXGDElZrUAzO\\_MI9tz8GNh6qAGFAaOHOOUpKMR9AbuVuZqqVf08oIpg-8ohoCEPcQAvD\\_BwE#!/9144/presentation/40064](https://www.abstractsonline.com/pp8/?ga=2.163795903.1679679606.1602008177-545131344.1565642004&gac=1.126052095.1601320366.CjwKCAjw5Kv7BRBSEiwAXGDElZrUAzO_MI9tz8GNh6qAGFAaOHOOUpKMR9AbuVuZqqVf08oIpg-8ohoCEPcQAvD_BwE#!/9144/presentation/40064)

<sup>5</sup> Berkowitz SA, Basu S, Meigs JB, Seligman HK. Food insecurity and health care expenditures in the United States, 2011-2013. *Health Serv Res.* 2018;53(3):1600-1620. doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12730

<sup>6</sup> Garcia SP, Haddix A, Barnett K. Incremental health care costs associated with food insecurity and chronic conditions among older adults. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2018;15:E108. doi:10.5888/pcd15.180058

<sup>7</sup> Lee JS, Frongillo EA. Nutritional and health consequences are associated with food insecurity among U.S. elderly persons. *J Nutr.* 2001;13(5):1503-9.

<sup>8</sup> Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials>