



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

*To the Appropriations Committee*

*Chair: Delegate Ben Barnes*

*February 2, 2024*

**House bill 0666: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

*Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0666: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement.*

*Inflation has raised the price of food substantially over the last several years, leaving many Maryland residents without food security and proper nourishment. According to a report published by the Maryland Food Bank, the percentage of Maryland residents facing hunger or food insecurity in 2013 was 21%. By June 2022, the percentage had increased to 33%, which is a 12% increase in less than 10 years. Furthermore, 46.9% of Maryland families stated that their children were sometimes or often not eating enough because food was unaffordable. Food insufficiency for families who are earning \$35,000 to \$50,000 nearly tripled from April 2022 to June 2022, highlighting a large disparity among lower-income families (2022). With the current monthly benefit of \$40/month which was set in 2019, the Maryland Rural Health Association supports HB0666 to increase the benefit to \$95. As proven by the data previously mentioned, a large portion of Maryland's residents facing food insecurity includes children. To preserve the health of Maryland's children, repealing the minimum age requirement for SNAP eligibility will prove extremely beneficial to families. Adequate nutrition for children will help them thrive physically and emotionally as they develop into adulthood. Providing additional financial assistance for food will not only keep Maryland residents of all ages fed, but it will also help them preserve their health due to adequate nutrition.*

*On behalf of the Maryland Rural Health Association,  
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