



*Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities*

Evelyn F. Crayton EdD, RD, LD  
Family & Consumers Sciences Professor,  
Nutrition, Dietetics and Hospitality Management

231 Duncan Hall,  
Auburn University  
Auburn, Al. 36849-5616

(334) 844-2224 Fax (334) 844-2236 Cell (334) 332-5654

email: [craytef@auburn.edu](mailto:craytef@auburn.edu)

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# Hunger and Nutrition in America: What's at Stake for Children, Families and Older Adults



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# A New Truth

The largest manifestation of malnutrition in the United States is **overweight** and **obesity**.

These conditions both coexist with, and at times, overshadow hunger as the nation's most significant nutrition problem.

Not being hungry is not the same  
as being well nourished.

# Feeding America Video

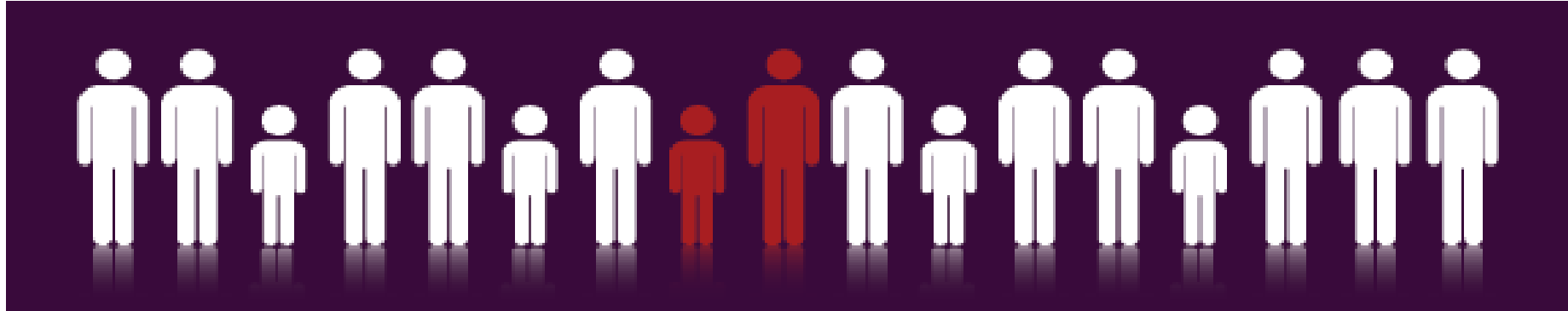
[Video on Hunger](#)

# Awareness and Data

- America needs to address the twin issues of hunger and poor nutrition.
- Yet despite the awareness raising, Americans remain woefully unaware of the full extent of the problem—that *one in six Americans is at risk of hunger*, and **children** and **older adults** are uniquely affected.

Almost **16.7 million children** (one in five) in the United States live in households where they lack consistent access to enough nutritious food necessary for a healthy life.





**1 in 5 children and 1 in 12 older adults  
is at risk of hunger in the U.S.\***

## Experience with Lack of Food\*\*

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# 1 in 3

*Nearly 1 in 3 adults had experience with/concern about lack of food among their family, friends or neighbors.*



# 1 in 10

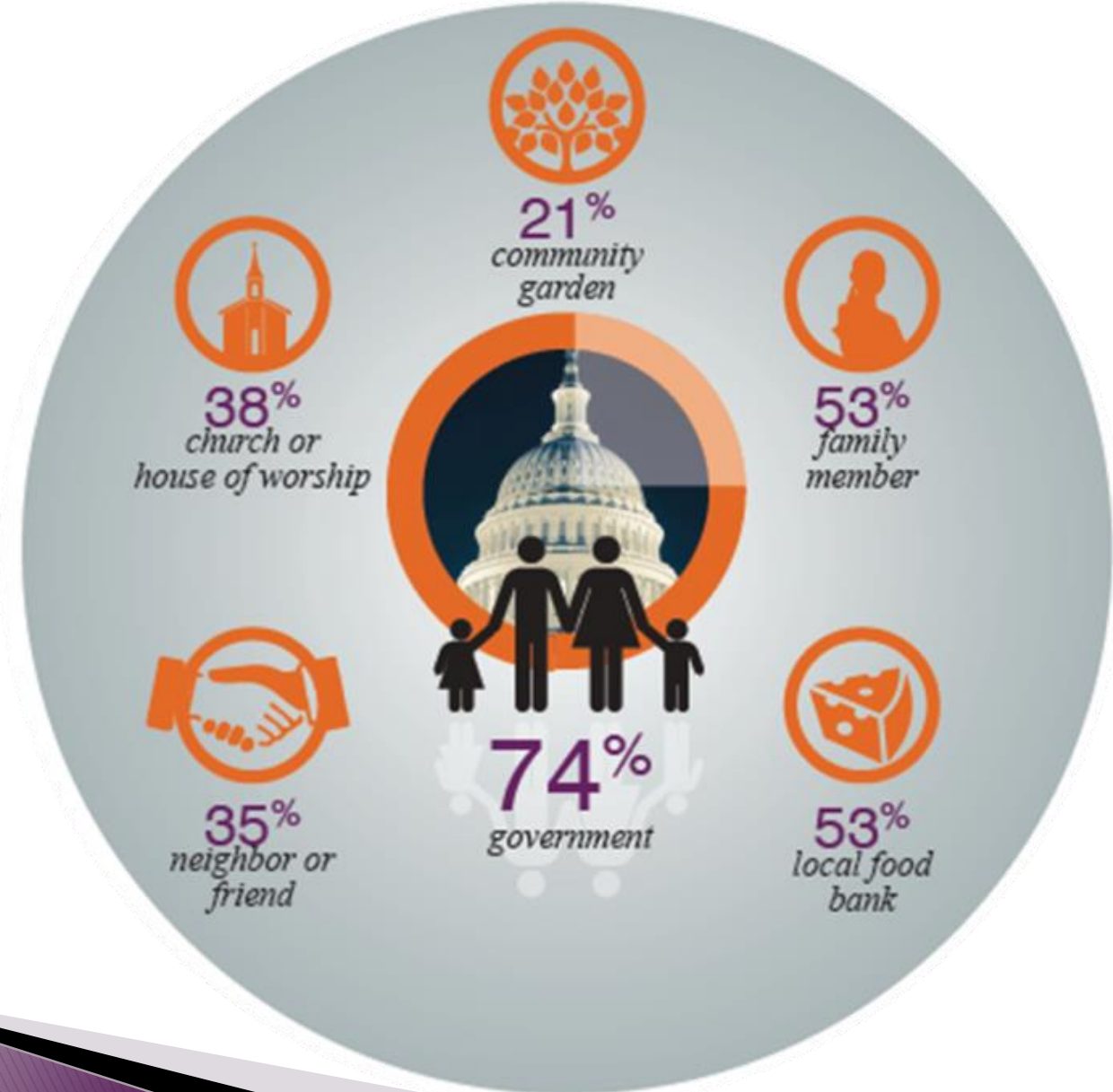
*1 in 10 adults went without a basic need (such as food, medicine or health care) in order to provide food for another family member.*



# Food Insecurity and Older Adults

- Food insecurity among older adults has increased in recent years. About 4.5 million (**one in 12**) adults age 60 and older are now **at risk of hunger** or food insecure.
- Using an expanded measure, Nearly 8.3 million (**one in seven**) older adults are, at times, **anxious** about whether they will have enough to eat.

# Households Seeking or Receiving Food Assistance



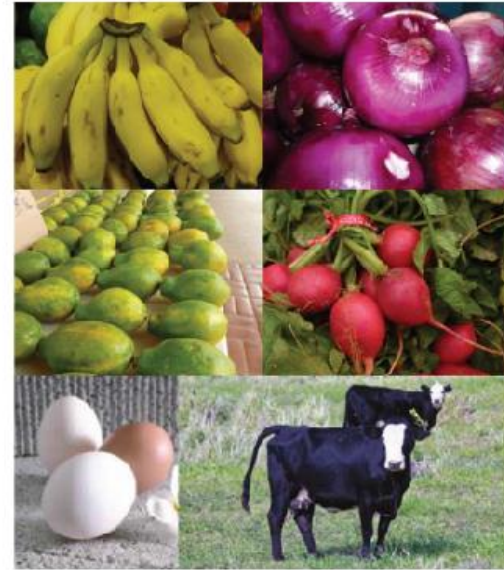
# Food Insecurity and Caregivers

- Those caring for our nation's younger and older generations are also hurting.
- **One in ten** Americans reports going without a basic need in order **to provide for the needs of another** family member.

# Hawaii Statistics

- Hawaii is 2,506 miles from the continental United States, and 85-90% of Hawaii's food is imported
  - Makes Hawaii vulnerable to natural disasters or anything to disrupt shipping and food supply

## *INCREASED FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY*



*OFFICE OF PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM*

*IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
STATE OF HAWAII*

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# Hawaii Data

	Hawaii (State)	Honolulu	Nation
Adult Obesity	22%	22%	35.7%
Unemployment	6.7%	5.6	9.6% (2010)
Children in Poverty	17%	14%	22%
Fast Food Restaurants	53%	56%	27%

**Hawaii data and National Fast Food Data:** [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)  
**Nation Data (obesity and unemployment):** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
**Children in poverty, Nation:** <http://www.nccp.org/topics/childpoverty.html>

# House of Delegates Update

## *How is Hunger an Issue for RDs?*

- **Until basic hunger and food security needs are met**, we can never expect our clients to be adventuresome enough to try a diet to affect their **health** in any way.
- Mostly, we work at the very tip of the pyramid, and we need to also **consider the foundation**

From Ruth Schneider,  
Idaho affiliate delegate  
Academy House of Delegates

# “Hierarchy of Food Needs” – Ellyn Satter



Ellyn Satter, MS,  
RD, LCSW, BCD  
“Hierarchy of  
Food Needs”



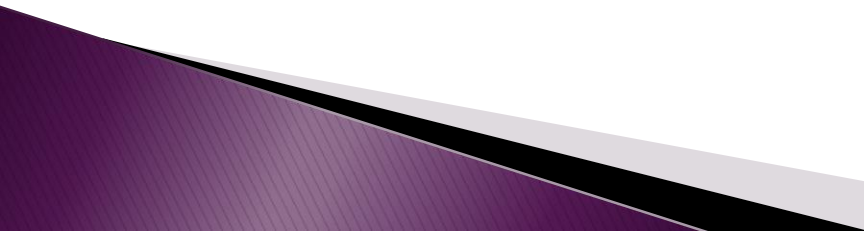
# Meeting Needs?

Over decades, our nation has created a network of nutrition programs designed to address the needs of people during tough times.






# Are these programs meeting the needs of our children and seniors today?

- American's demographics are changing
  - The number of food insecure seniors is projected to increase by 50 percent by 2025
  - Research shows baby boomers, who are now turning 60 in record numbers, want to engage with their communities but are less likely to identify as "old"
  - One in five children lives in food insecure households
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# Federal Food Programs

- Elderly Nutrition Program
  - The Emergency Food Assistance Program
  - The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
  - School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, Afterschool Nutrition Program, Summer Food Service Program, and Child Care Food Program
  - The Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children – or WIC
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# Young Adults

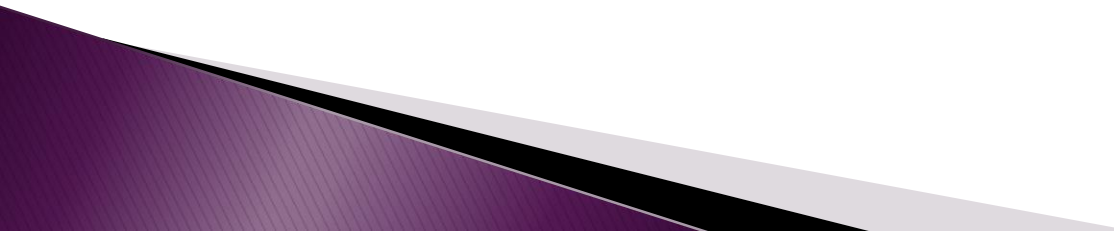


- The population of young people known as the “millennials” (those born between the early 80s and early 90s) is the largest in America.
- The millennial generation also faces an extremely large problem: **unemployment.**
- Food insecurity often correlates with unemployment.

# Research on Hunger

- Anti-hunger advocates using **evidence-based research** have elevated issues around hunger and nutrition among single-age groups.
- The advocacy community has proposed an abundance of thoughtful recommendations about how to combat food insecurity in the United States.
- This report affirms many of their recommendations.

# What Can Registered Dietitians Do?

- Directly engage older and younger community members in tackling the hunger and nutrition challenges our country faces.
  - View people of different generations as problem-solvers and sources of support for each other.
  - Recast single-age interventions as integrated opportunities that improve health, stimulate learning, strengthen communities and save money.
  - Cultivate the leadership qualities that exist in people of all ages.
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# Food for Thought

- What is the role of the dietitian in reducing the burden of hunger
  - In the community?
  - In policy/advocacy?
  - In the local government?
  - Other?



# Registered Dietitian's Role

- **Community:**
  - Understand your community's needs and resources
  - Volunteer with organizations helping to fight hunger
  - Be willing and available
  - Educate the community or patients/clients in need of different resources around the area
  - Fill in the gap and connect people in need to the resources they need

# Registered Dietitian's Role

- **Policy/advocacy:**
  - Advocate for weekend food programs for kids
  - Make local programs known; therefore, more available to those who really need it
  - Make community presentations about hunger and ways to join the fight against it
  - Educate colleagues about the problem



# The Academy's Advocacy Issues: 2013

- The reauthorization of the Ryan White Act
- The Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act
- The Farm Bill: Senior Farmers Market, SNAP-Ed, The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEAP) and EFNEP
- The Preventing Diabetes Medicare Act
- Access to Frontline Healthy Care Act

\*On the Handouts you have Received

# Registered Dietitian's Role



- **Local Government:**
  - Provide recipes for SNAP
  - Get to know local leaders
  - Build alliances with assistance programs, local governments, healthcare, legislators
  - Discuss hunger issues at town hall meetings so that populations are aware of the problem

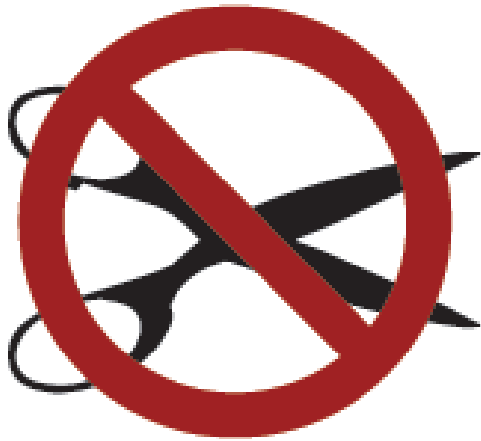
Responses from RDs at the Alabama Dietetic Association Meeting: March 2013

# Registered Dietitian's Role

- **Other:**
  - In many communities, people are too **embarrassed** and **prideful** to seek help. **Counseling** them to assure them it is OK to get assistance is key.
  - Get the media involved

## Public Support for Federal Food Programs

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**70%**

*70% of U.S. adults agree that policymakers should prevent cuts to existing federal food assistance programs for children, youth and older adults.*

## Knowledge About Nutritional Needs

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**24%**

*Nationwide, nearly one fourth of U.S. adults do not know how to access information on the unique nutritional needs of children, youth, and older adults.*

# Trends

- Obesity is already an epidemic, and will continue to rise, along with heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, cancer and arthritis.
- Dramatic rises in childhood obesity – and **patterns established early in life tend to continue**, whether healthful or harmful.



# Nutrition Trends

- Many consumers have no idea of their own nutritional status, weight or diet.
- Many parents have erroneous perceptions of their children's nutritional status – and don't recognize long-term health problems for overweight kids.
- Parents are disengaged from kids eating habits.
- Believe kids will “outgrow.”
- Reluctant to help their children because they don't know how.

**Trend: a generation of children with shorter life expectancy than their parents.**



Fact: Adopting a healthy diet, increasing exercise can prevent the onset of diabetes.

**Fact: No Medicare coverage for pre-diabetes**



# Diabetes and Medicare



- ▶ Fact: Medicare coverage only begins when the patient has full blown diabetes.
- ▶ Fact: Pitifully few referrals to qualified experts for personalized intervention and counseling.

# Federal Nutrition Research

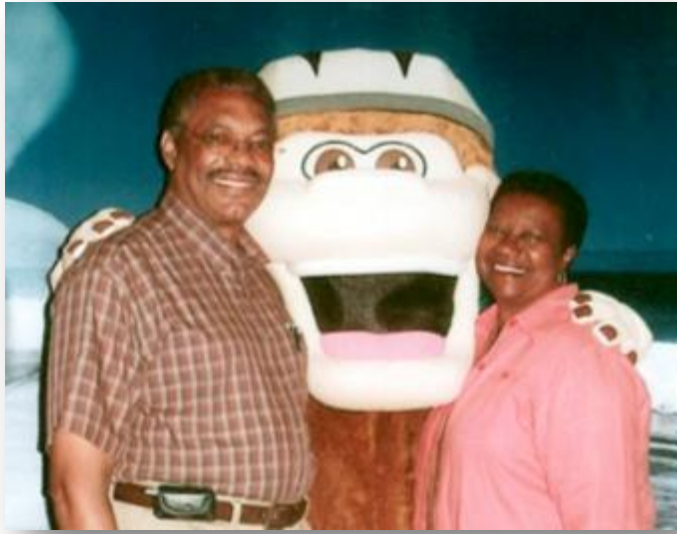
May be the most important component of federal nutrition policy

- ✓ Provided the critical breakthroughs – vitamins, minerals, catechins, free radicals...
- ✓ Modeling how nutrients work in the body
- ✓ Special needs of distinct populations
- ✓ Genetics
- ✓ Focus on human health and nutrition
- ✓ Focus on improving foods
- ✓ Focus on policies and program outcomes

# A Paradigm Shift

- ▶ U.S. leaders must integrate prevention in the nation's health care system.
- ▶ The private sector must ensure that health care is patient centered.
- ▶ Dynamic budgeting is needed.
- ▶ Help people before they are patients.





**Evelyn Crayton**



**Robert Egger**



**Jim Weill**

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The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

Evelyn F. Crayton, EdD, RD LD  
Director-at-Large 2010-2013

231 Duncan Hall,  
Auburn University  
Auburn, Al. 36849-5616

(334) 844-2224 Fax (334) 844-2236 Cell (334) 332-5654  
email: [craytef@auburn.edu](mailto:craytef@auburn.edu)