Supporting the designation of the week of September 18 through September 22, 2023, as “Malnutrition Awareness Week”.

RESOLUTION

Supporting the designation of the week of September 18 through September 22, 2023, as “Malnutrition Awareness Week”.

Whereas malnutrition is the condition that occurs when an individual does not get enough protein, calories, or nutrients;

Whereas malnutrition is a significant problem in the United States and around the world, crossing all age, racial, class, gender, and geographic lines;

Whereas malnutrition can be driven by social determinants of health, including poverty or economic instability, access to affordable healthcare, and low health literacy;
Whereas there are inextricable and cyclical links between poverty and malnutrition;

Whereas the Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as when an individual or household does not have regular, reliable access to the foods needed for good health;

Whereas communities of color, across all age groups, are disproportionately likely to experience both food insecurity and malnutrition;

Whereas Black children are almost 3 times more likely to live in a food-insecure household than White children;

Whereas infants, older adults, individuals with chronic diseases, and other vulnerable populations are particularly at risk for malnutrition;

Whereas the American Academy of Pediatrics has found that failure to provide key nutrients during early childhood may result in lifelong deficits in brain function;

Whereas disease-associated malnutrition affects between 30 and 50 percent of patients admitted to hospitals, and the medical costs of hospitalized patients with malnutrition can be 300 percent more than the medical costs of properly nourished patients;

Whereas, according to the report entitled “National Blueprint: Achieving Quality Malnutrition Care for Older Adults, 2020 Update” of the Malnutrition Quality Collaborative, as many as ½ of older adults living in the United States are malnourished or at risk for malnutrition;

Whereas, according to recent surveys conducted by the Aging Network—
(1) 76 percent of older adults receiving meals at senior centers and other congregate facilities report improved health outcomes; and

(2) 84 percent of older adults receiving home-delivered meals indicate improved health outcomes;

Whereas disease-associated malnutrition in older adults alone costs the United States more than $51,300,000,000 each year; and

Whereas the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition established “Malnutrition Awareness Week” to raise awareness about, and promote the prevention of, malnutrition throughout the lifespan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

1  (1) supports the designation of “Malnutrition Awareness Week”;

2  (2) recognizes registered dietitian nutritionists and other nutrition professionals, health care providers, school food service workers, social workers, advocates, caregivers, and other professionals and agencies for their efforts to advance awareness about, treatment for, and prevention of malnutrition;

3  (3) recognizes the importance of Federal nutrition programs, including the nutrition programs under title III of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3021 et seq.) and Federal child nutrition programs, for their role in combating malnutrition;
(4) supports increased funding for the critical programs described in paragraph (3);

(5) recognizes—

(A) the importance of medical nutrition therapy under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); and

(B) the need for vulnerable populations to have access to nutrition counseling;

(6) recognizes the importance of the innovative research conducted by the National Institutes of Health relating to—

(A) nutrition, dietary patterns, and the human gastrointestinal microbiome; and

(B) how the factors described in subparagraph (A) influence the prevention or development of chronic disease throughout the lifespan;

(7) supports access to malnutrition screening and assessment for all patients;

(8) encourages the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to evaluate the implementation of newly approved malnutrition electronic clinical quality measures; and

(9) acknowledges the importance of access to healthy food for children, especially in childcare set-
tings and schools, and the benefits of evidence-based nutrition standards.