



# Food Insecurity Measures

## WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Food insecurity is a social determinant of health (SDoH) that affects one in nine American households. Food insecurity and other SDoH have a significant impact on disparities in health, healthcare, and health outcomes. In particular, food insecurity contributes to diabetes, stroke, cancer, hypertension, asthma, chronic kidney disease, and other chronic conditions. Addressing and accounting for SDoH is critical for improving healthcare quality and achieving health equity. Yet, healthcare quality improvement efforts have largely excluded food insecurity and SDoH. Establishing performance measures that address food insecurity within the clinical setting is critical to improving health and health outcomes for individuals with food insecurity.

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This NQF Measure Incubator® project facilitated the development of performance measures that integrate food insecurity within clinical care and an implementation guide to disseminate best practices.

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## PHASE 1: STRATEGY SESSION

As a first step, NQF convened a Measure Incubator® strategy session with a multistakeholder Expert Panel in June 2018. At this meeting, panelists considered strategies to overcome the impact of food insecurity on health outcomes, building on prior work convened by NQF. The Panel emphasized that food insecurity screening must be paired with appropriate clinical action and consideration of disparities-sensitive conditions to effect change and address SDoH, particularly food insecurity, within the context of the healthcare system. The Expert Panel identified and prioritized seven measure concepts that could become performance measures for food insecurity. These concepts focus on screening, intervention, and intermediate outcomes that provide context for the success of this effort. Panelists recommended further exploration of systematic approaches to screening and referral as well as accounting for nonclinical drivers of food insecurity. NQF engaged a broad stakeholder group in this Measure Incubator project, including patient partners that work with the food-insecure populations, clinicians, payers, researchers, and measure developers.

## PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE AND MEASURE INCUBATION

At the strategy session, the Expert Panel emphasized the need for quality measures, implementation guidance, and redesigned policies, workflows, and payment systems to incentivize sustainable clinical-community partnerships to address food insecurity. Building on the strategy session findings, NQF developed an [implementation guide](#) to disseminate best practices to address food insecurity in healthcare to support measure implementation.

Additionally, [Quality Insights](#), through the Measure Incubator®, developed three measure concepts into fully-specified and tested electronic clinical quality measures (eQMs) that examine food insecurity screening, appropriate clinical action (e.g., referral), and change in food insecurity status. Quality Insights gathered input from patients, clinicians, and other experts to refine the concepts and tested the three eQMs using data from diverse clinical practices that work with food-insecure patients, considering various approaches to account for risk to generate valid comparisons without masking disparities. The measures aim to improve the health and health outcomes for individuals with food insecurity by evaluating processes and outcomes that address food insecurity within clinical care. Humana is the steward for the three food insecurity eQMs.

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