

NEWS RELEASE

## Anthem BCBS Foundation Distributes \$300,000 to Three Food Banks in VA to Expand 'Food as Medicine' Initiatives Across the State

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RICHMOND, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation in Virginia, a philanthropic arm of Elevance Health Foundation, announced today an additional \$100,000 each to three food banks granted across the Commonwealth to further expand the 'Food as Medicine' program. This initiative will support the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Feeding Southwest Virginia, and the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore as they collaborate with local health care partners to screen patients for food insecurity during health care visits. The health care partner will then connect patients who screen positive for food insecurity to food assistance resources onsite at health care facilities and at community-based food pantries and meal programs.

The 'Food as Medicine' program, a Feeding America® initiative funded by the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation in Virginia, will help connect people facing hunger across the state to food distribution programs that provide access to healthy food options. This grant is part of Feeding America and Elevance Health Foundation's largest investment in 'Food as Medicine' and reflects their joint commitment to transform the charitable food experience for neighbors and the health care system, while promoting the wellbeing of people facing hunger.

Since 2019 and 2022 respectively, the Anthem Foundation's support has enabled Feed More, a food bank serving Central Virginia, and Capital Area Food Bank, to address food insecurity and support the health of neighbors in need. The food banks both recently received \$450,000 grants to continue their initiatives.

"We are thrilled to continue our 'Food as Medicine' efforts in additional communities across the Commonwealth," said Monica Schmude, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia. "We are very proud of our work with Feed More and Capital Area Food Bank and look forward to making a difference in food insecurity with other

food bank partners and health systems throughout Virginia."

A \$100,000 grant will support the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank in Verona, VA, who will be partnering with UVA Dialysis Centers, Augusta Health, Healthy Communities Health Center, Blue Ridge Free Clinic, and Free Clinic of Central Virginia in their "Food as Medicine" initiatives.

Feeding Southwest Virginia in Salem, VA, will use the funds to support a role dedicated to maintaining and cultivating health partnerships, including organizations such as Carilion Clinic, Ballad Health, the Health Wagon, In-Home Care, Legacy Hospice and Palliative Care, Mount Rogers Community Services, Roanoke City Health Department, and Wise County Health Department. The role's title is Agency Relations Coordinator of Health Partnerships.

In Norfolk, VA, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore is partnering with Chesapeake Regional Healthcare, Chesapeake Emergency Services Mobile Integrated Healthcare, Chesapeake Health Department, and Kin and Kids Consulting, LLC.

Not having access to nutritious food can make it more difficult to stay healthy and manage health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. It can also add stress, which can greatly impact physical and mental health. The 'Food as Medicine' program will build and strengthen connections between these food banks and local health care partners that will help identify learnings and best practices to enable positive health outcomes in participants.

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Feeding Southwest Virginia, and the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, members of the Feeding America network, are three of 14 food banks to receive this grant from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, and one of 35 food banks who are supported by Feeding America and Elevance Health Foundation's broader 'Food as Medicine' partnership. The food banks in Virginia are part of a statewide health equity collaborative, led by the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, to improve food access and health outcomes for all Virginians.

To learn more about the Federation of Virginia Food Banks' statewide Food Is Medicine collaborative, visit <https://vafoodbanks.org/programs/food-is-medicine>.

To learn more about Elevance Health Foundation's Food As Medicine work, visit <https://elevancehealth.foundation/encouraging-food-as-medicine>.

**About Anthem Foundation:**

The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Association, is a philanthropic arm of the Elevance Health Foundation. The Foundation works to address health equity by focusing on improving the health of the socially vulnerable through strategic partnerships and programs in our communities with an emphasis on maternal child health; mental health; and food as medicine. Additionally, the Foundation also responds to disasters when our communities need us the most. The Foundation coordinates the company's year-round Dollars for Dollars program which provides a 100 percent match of associates' donations, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. ®ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbol are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. To learn more about the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation and the Elevance Health Foundation, please visit [www.elevancehealth.foundation](http://www.elevancehealth.foundation) and its blog at [www.medium.com/elevancehealthfoundation](http://www.medium.com/elevancehealthfoundation).

## About Feeding America

Feeding America is committed to an America where no one is hungry. We support tens of millions of people who experience food insecurity to get the food and resources they say they need to thrive as part of a nationwide network of food banks, statewide food bank associations, food pantries and meal programs. We also invest in innovative solutions to increase equitable access to nutritious food, advocate for legislation that improves food security and work to address factors that impact food security, such as health, cost of living and employment. We partner with people experiencing food insecurity, policymakers, organizations, and supporters, united with them in a movement to end hunger. Visit [FeedingAmerica.org](http://FeedingAmerica.org) to learn more.

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