



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF AFFORDABLE HEALTHY FOODS IS CRITICAL TO PREVENTION OF DIMISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY

There should be distribution systems for affordable, healthy food for all people in America.

A forum on hunger entitled “All You Can Eat? How Hungry is America in Good Times versus Recession?” was held at the Center for American Progress. Presenters at the forum was an author on hunger in America and a public health advocate who has investigated procedures for distribution of affordable and healthy foods to vulnerable populations.

Summary

There was evidence presented at the forum that there are barriers to distribution of healthy foods. Vulnerable populations have limited opportunities to access quality, affordable, healthy foods, which is associated with health problems. Upper income communities in Los Angeles County have 2 to 3 times as many super markets per capita as low income communities and white communities, and 3.2 times as many as blacks. Furthermore, people in vulnerable populations may have to pay 10% higher prices for foods than those found at large supermarkets. There is evidence that access to healthy foods, for vulnerable populations, through farmers markets and WIC farmers markets result in 57% increase in their fruit and vegetable consumption. In addition, there is a decline in city supermarkets in impoverished areas. For instance, there was a decline of over 80% of supermarkets in one city. For the most part, vulnerable population must rely on their nutrition from convenience stores and fast food eating places. Thus, there was agreement, at the forum, that business models appear to be ineffective for distribution of healthy, affordable nutrition to vulnerable populations.

Disability Prevention Issue

There are over 39 million impoverished people in America, 60 million if the European standard of 60% of the median income is used and many are of poor health. Business models appear to be inadequate for distribution of affordable healthy foods to vulnerable populations. Thus, it would seem that other options to the business model could be developed to solve this public health problem that appears to result in poor health of vulnerable people in America. Collaborative efforts among policy makers, foundations, community organizations, researchers and advocates are needed to solve inadequate distribution of healthy affordable food. Failure to provide the public health benefit of adequate nutrition may result

in unnecessary diminished health over lifetimes of many people in America that may contribute to disability.

Intervention

A letter was written and a post-forum discussion was held with a forum presenter on reforming distribution systems of affordable healthy foods to prevent diminished health.

Recommendation

There should be distribution systems for affordable, healthy food for all people in America.