

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
US Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
US Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell,

The undersigned organizations strongly urge Congress to include the Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Demonstration Pilot Act in any legislative package to improve healthcare and our economy. We are strong supporters of expanding equitable access to the medically tailored meal intervention (MTMs). By expanding access to this life saving intervention for Americans living with severe, complex, and chronic illness, and scaling MTM pilot programs in rural, urban and frontier communities across the country, we can improve health outcomes, lower healthcare costs and, through rigorous evaluation, understand the impact of this intervention. This bipartisan and bicameral policy change will boost the health of older Americans across the nation by providing a proven nutrition intervention in a clinically appropriate, geographically diverse landscape.

According to the [National Council on Aging](#), “nearly 95% of adults 60 and older have at least one chronic condition, while 80% have two or more,” and there is currently no access to medically tailored meals in Original Medicare. The Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Demonstration Pilot Act directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a 4-year demonstration pilot program to provide the MTM intervention to some of our nation’s most vulnerable Medicare enrollees. Recently hospitalized Medicare enrollees with conditions such as congestive heart failure, diabetes, COPD, and kidney disease would receive the MTM intervention and their health outcomes would be closely monitored. The pilots would run in at least 20 hospitals in at least 10 states. This geographic diversity would help researchers identify how we can integrate medically tailored meals into the healthcare system to improve cost-efficacy, equity, and health outcomes, for a high-risk population of older adults.

Unlike federally funded meal programs that focus on alleviating hunger, MTMs are a clinical intervention to support health outcomes. Medically tailored meals are delivered to individuals living with severe, complex, and chronic illness through a referral from a medical professional or healthcare plan. Meal plans are tailored to the medical needs of the recipient by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN), and meals are cooked from nutritionally dense ingredients and delivered to the homes of recipients. Individuals receive nutrition counseling, education and/or medical nutrition therapy throughout the intervention and are reassessed at regular intervals. By pairing food and nutrition services, healthcare providers that prescribe MTMs help patients to treat and manage their illnesses.

The Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Demonstration Pilot Act builds upon the robust body of evidence that exists in support of providing MTMs as a research-based intervention to help treat and manage illness. Thanks to successful and effective programs around the country that are already implementing MTMs, we know that the intervention meets a critical need that is not currently addressed by our healthcare system. [Studies](#) have shown that MTMs lead to: (1) reductions in emergency department visits by 70%; (2) reductions in inpatient hospital admissions by 52%; (3) reductions in admission to skilled nursing facilities by 72%; and (4) 16% net decreases in health care costs. In fact, [research](#) conducted by the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy shows if all eligible patients received access to MTMs, in just the first year of service, almost 1.5 million hospitalizations could be avoided for a net cost savings of \$13.6 billion.

To continue building on these successful efforts and expand access to this cost-saving benefit for eligible Medicare enrollees, we urge Congress to quickly pass the Medically Tailored Home-Delivered Meals Demonstration Pilot Act. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out at info@fimcoalition.org.

Sincerely,