
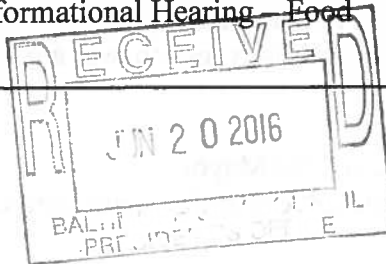


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen <i>Leana Wen</i>	Health Department	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	CB 16-0291R – Informational Hearing – Food Stamps for Seniors		

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o 409 City Hall

June 15, 2016



The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 16-0291R – Informational Hearing – Food Stamps for Seniors. The purpose of this bill is to discuss how food stamps known as the Food Supplement Program in Maryland, can help feed the hungry in our elderly population, and how this program could better serve seniors in the future.

Food insecurity is a constant struggle and challenge for older adults who are on fixed and limited income. Many seniors face chronic health conditions which may require multiple physician visits, increased medications and special diet needs. Often the decision must be to pay health care costs or purchase prescriptions, so buying healthy foods is not an option. Coupled with lack of access and transportation to affordable food venues, more must be done to help feed the hungry in our elderly population.

According to the 2013 U.S. Census data, Baltimore City had a population of 622,104. Older adults aged 75-74 were 16.7% and older adults aged 75 or older were 17.9% of that population. The greatest number of Maryland’s low income older adults live in Baltimore City represents 17.2% of those living in poverty.

A recent report from the National Council on Aging entitled Senior Debt Facts also revealed that the rising national debt ceiling for older adults has steadily increased from 1989 to 2013 and beyond. Debt rates rose from 58.2% in 2010 to 61.3% in 2013 with contributing factors pointing to increased health costs and credit card debt. Older adults face a future of financial uncertainty.

Recommendations regarding how SNAP could better serve seniors in the future:

- Expand community locations where older adults may apply for SNAP;
- Increase benefit amount according to inflation costs for food/groceries;
- Partner with aging organizations to serve as application sites;
- Provide access to Food Stamp stand-alone, simplified application process, not just online process;
- Waive face to face DSS interview if client has filed an application at an approved SNAP site;

*Comments*