



March 28, 2025

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Courtney Kennedy and I am the Director of Nutrition and Education at Good Shepherd Food Bank. I am here today to support of LD 814, An Act to Provide Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-based Services and Programs to Support Older Adults.

This bill expands coordinated community programming for older adults to include case management and navigation services. It provides ongoing funding to develop programs and deliver services for older adults in each of the State's coordinated community program areas. This bill supports the ongoing strategies of the Roadmap to End Hunger in Maine, as well as the Governor's Cabinet on Aging.

Statistics highlight a disproportionate number of older adults in Maine experience food insecurity, meaning they lack reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food. Although the numbers vary, they paint a bleak picture. According to the most recent data by Feeding America, 40,000 adults in Maine over the age of 50 are food insecure. According to Meals on Wheels, that number is over 50,000. In 2017, Good Shepherd Food Bank took a deeper dive into the prevalence of hunger among older Mainers and released a report, OLDER MAINERS, EMPTY PLATES: RESEARCH ON SENIOR FOOD INSECURITY IN MAINE.

Older Mainers often have fixed incomes, limited mobility, specific nutrition needs and chronic health issues. Older adults have an increased risk of nutritional deficiencies and often have difficulty meeting the requirements of a healthy diet. Food insecurity compounds the issues facing this vulnerable population and has serious health and financial implications. Older Mainers who are food insecure are more than twice as likely to report fair or poor health status than those not facing food insecurity. In one study, food insecure older Mainers exhibited poorer health results than their food secure counterparts on every health indicator. Food insecure older Mainers face an increased risk of chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, heart attack, asthma and respiratory disorders, and congestive heart failure. Health conditions associated with food insecurity also have financial implications at the household, hospital, insurance, and societal levels. LD 814 is an opportunity to connect older Mainers in need of resources to the resources available in their communities.

Thank you for considering our testimony, and we urge you to support LD 814.

In partnership,

Courtney Kennedy
Good Shepherd Food Bank