



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Food Insecurity and Seniors

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What does it mean to be food insecure? The United States Department of Agriculture defines “food insecurity” as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. This includes a lack of available financial resources for food at the level of the household. In 2017, an estimated one in eight Americans were food insecure, equating to 40 million Americans. In Ohio in that same year, Feeding America shared that 14.5 percent of the state’s population was determined to experience a food insecurity.

Vulnerable populations for food insecurity include children, the elderly, and low-income households. According to Feeding America, nearly 5 million senior citizens currently face hunger in our country. And sadly, many are often faced with the choice of buying either groceries or medical care due to the costs and limited funds available.

Poorer nutrition also increases the risk for disease and challenges of disease management. Food insecure seniors are more likely to experience depression, asthma, chest pain, limitations in activity, and high blood pressure.

So how can we help seniors in our district who have food insecurity? One way to find out more about programs and options available is by calling our Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277. Here, you can talk with one of our Resource Specialists and learn more about food options in your area including home-delivered meal and congregate meal options, and local Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs. Currently in our district, Ross County is the only county that participates in the Senior Farmers Market Program, but there are plans in 2020 to expand the Program to some additional counties in the state that will be determined. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is also available to help low-income citizens with the necessary food they need, although only two in five SNAP-eligible seniors are enrolled. There is help available for those who qualify.

Raising awareness and having someone to talk to about options is a good way to increase knowledge about local programs that are available to help those who are experiencing food insecurity.

For more information about nutrition programs in your community for you or someone you know, contact our Agency at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

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