



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2017

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Statewide Hunger and Health Summit Brings Stakeholders Together to Fight Hunger, Improve Health, and Strengthen Communities

Wisconsin (May 5, 2017) Experts on health and hunger from across the state, as well as state and local leaders will come together to search for solutions during Feeding Wisconsin's second annual Hunger and Health Summit at Hotel Mead in Wisconsin Rapids, May 9 & 10. The theme of the Summit is "Forward Together."

With uncertainty surrounding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and potential changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known as FoodShare in Wisconsin), the conference aims to create a space for local direct service agencies, healthcare professionals, advocates, policy experts, and state agencies together to learn, network, and build capacity to improve their efforts to fight hunger, improve health, and strengthen local communities.

- WHO:** State experts on health and hunger including:
- Bevan Baker, Milwaukee Health Commissioner
 - Katharine Broton, Wisconsin HOPE Lab
 - Jennifer Casey, Executive Director at the Fondy Food Center
 - Paul Kelleher, PhD, Associate Professor of Bioethics and Philosophy at UW-Madison
 - Robert Zeaske, Chief Executive Officer, Second Harvest Heartland
- WHAT:** Health and Hunger Summit hosted by Feeding Wisconsin
- WHERE:** Hotel Mead, Wisconsin Rapids
- WHEN:** May 9 & 10

"Hunger and health are intimately connected," said David Lee, the executive director at Feeding Wisconsin. "Hunger leads to poor health, which can keep people out of the workforce, reduce children's ability to learn, and increase public healthcare costs. Our intent with the conference is to help hunger fighters, health promoters and other stakeholders throughout the state to network and learn from each other in order to cross-pollinate and accelerate our progress toward a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin. Given the challenges our friends and neighbors are facing with rising healthcare costs and increased barriers to nutrition assistance, this work now seems more important than ever."

In addition to the 20 track sessions led by state and local leaders over the course of the day-and-a-half conference, the event will also feature three general sessions led by national and state leaders to explore emerging issues in hunger, nutrition, and health.

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The opening general session on May 9 at 1pm will be given by **Katharine Broton**, a researcher at the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, a national leader on the issue of hunger on college campuses. The title of her talk is “Too Distressed to Learn: Hunger and Mental Health in Higher Education.”

The Breakfast Panel Discussion on May 10 at 8:15 am on “What is ‘Healthy?’: Deepening Our Understanding to Improve Health and Strengthen Communities through Food and Policy” will feature **Jennifer Casey**, Executive Director at the Fondy Food Center, **Paul Kelleher, PhD**, Associate Professor of Bioethics and Philosophy at University of Wisconsin, Madison, and **Robert Zeaske**, Chief Executive Officer, Second Harvest Heartland.

The Summit’s Keynote Session, “Addressing Public Health and Nutrition in Wisconsin’s Largest and Most Diverse City,” will be given by **Milwaukee Health Commissioner Bevan Baker** on May 10th at 1:00 pm.

Last year’s inaugural, one-day event, attended 180 people from across the state, laid the groundwork for this expanded conference this year.

“What’s really exciting about the Summit is that it brings together people from across the state to collaborate and work together to solve hunger and improve health,” said Patti Habeck, President of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, the largest food bank in the Feeding Wisconsin network of food banks.

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Feeding Wisconsin is the state association of the six regional Feeding America food banks that provide emergency food assistance and access to benefit assistance in every corner of our state. Its mission is help its food banks and partners fight hunger, improve health, and strengthen communities.

Its members include: Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, Feed My People Food Bank, Second Harvest Heartland, Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, and Channel-One Regional Food Bank.

Together, with its collective network of 1,000 local food pantries located in every county of Wisconsin, the Feeding Wisconsin food banks provide 50 million meals to nearly 600,00 friends and neighbors every year.

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