

# ALICE - Health



## Active, healthy individuals and communities: Does having more money lead to better health?

### Facts

The USDA defines food insecurity as *the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods*. In Washington state, 14.6 percent of residents are food insecure, including 366,450 children.

Many low-income households work long hours at low-paying jobs and do not have time to regularly shop for and prepare low-cost meals. In addition, they are often faced with higher prices for and minimal access to fresh food in low-income neighborhoods, which makes healthy cooking at home difficult and unaffordable.

Studies have found that access to medical care alone cannot help people achieve and maintain good health if they have unmet basic needs, such as not having enough to eat, living in a rundown apartment without heat, or being unemployed.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), approximately 3% of people in Washington live with serious mental illness. Of those, only 29% receive mental health services.

Low income is a leading cause of avoidable hospital use and costs, according to a recent Rutgers study. When care is hard to access, health problems get worse and the cost of treatment increases significantly for the patient or— if the patient can't pay— for the state.

### Solutions

Four in five physicians surveyed say unmet social needs are directly leading to poor health. The top social needs include: fitness programs, nutritious food, transportation assistance, employment assistance, adult education, and housing assistance. Increased access to these crucial needs leads to improved health and well being.

Healthier diets help prevent excessive medical costs, lost productivity, and premature deaths associated with poor health and chronic conditions.

Nationally, every dollar spent on substance abuse treatment saves \$7 in future health care spending.

People who have access to regular preventative care are much less likely to develop chronic health conditions.

Your gift to United Way helps local families with:

- Nutritious food options
- Healthy activity programs
- Prevention and recovery and much, much more!



ALICE has no safety net in times of crisis.



ALICE's income falls short of Essentials.



ALICE is working, yet is financially vulnerable.

