

September 4, 2018

Statement Opposing Multivitamin and Other Dietary Supplement Purchases with SNAP

We, the undersigned organizations, oppose any legislation or amendments that would allow SNAP benefits to be used to purchase multivitamins and other dietary supplements. Regular monthly SNAP benefits are too low to purchase an adequate, healthy diet on a consistent basis. Including multivitamins and other dietary supplements will further exacerbate the inadequacy of SNAP benefits. To our knowledge, there is no evidence that including multivitamins or other dietary supplements in SNAP will improve food security. If anything, by diverting already limited food budgets from food to pills, such legislation or amendments have the potential to worsen food insecurity. Additionally, an underlying premise of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans – the cornerstone for federal nutrition policy – is that nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods. Including multivitamins and other dietary supplements does not align with this premise.

Congress should instead focus on provisions that increase the adequacy of SNAP benefits, such as moving from the Thrifty Food Plan to the Low Cost Food Plan as the basis for SNAP allotments. Research demonstrates that more adequate SNAP benefits improve food security, dietary quality, and health outcomes.

We urge Congress to protect and strengthen SNAP in the 2018 Farm Bill, and that includes voting “no” on any amendments that would allow multivitamins and dietary supplements to be purchased with SNAP benefits.

1,000 Days

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

American Diabetes Association

American Heart Association

American Public Health Association

Bread for the World

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Children’s HealthWatch

Feeding America

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)

National WIC Association

Union of Concerned Scientists

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW)