



ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

**The Root Cause Coalition is focused on a range of social drivers and their effect on public health. Below is a summary highlighting several organizations focused on “Food is Medicine,” a concept that emphasizes the role of diet and nutrition in maintaining health while also preventing and treating diet-related diseases. This approach highlights the idea that what we eat can have a profound impact on our overall well-being, much like traditional medicines. The following organizations are highlighted below for their advocacy, research, and education in the Food is Medicine space. This complements the Coalition’s July Research on Food is Medicine available [here](#).**

[American Heart Association](#) - The American Heart Association’s Health Care by Food initiative is building the evidence needed to show clinical and cost effectiveness so patients with acute or chronic disease, or with risk factors for disease, can access cost-effective food is medicine programs as a covered benefit through public and private health insurance. The initiative’s research efforts were announced in January 2024, with funds awarded to foundational research projects across the country and led by experts in the food and nutrition, behavioral science, epidemiology and cardiovascular research fields. Read more about their Food is Medicine work [here](#).

[Department of Health and Human Services](#) - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) developed a Food is Medicine initiative in response to a congressionally funded initiative in fiscal year 2023. This congressional action directed the Secretary of HHS, in consultation with other federal agencies, to develop and implement a federal strategy to reduce nutrition-related chronic diseases and food insecurity to improve health and racial equity in the United States. This includes diet-related research and programmatic efforts that will increase access to Food is Medicine initiatives.

[Food & Society at the Aspen Institute’s Food is Medicine Program](#) - Food & Society at the Aspen Institute brings together public health leaders, policymakers, researchers, farmers, chefs, food makers, and entrepreneurs to find practical solutions to food system challenges and inequities. The goal is to help people of all income levels eat better and more healthful diets. Food & Society’s Food is Medicine Research Action Plan, published in 2022, quickly became the definitive go-to source of all Food is Medicine research—it is the only comprehensive overview of all peer-reviewed nutrition-intervention studies. The revision, published in 2024, fully updates the quickly evolving body of research and authoritatively describes the opportunities as well as the challenges of scaling, evaluating, and delivering health-promoting food where it is most needed. The report keeps equity and full community inclusion at its core.

Food is Medicine Coalition (FIMC)– FIMC is a national coalition of nonprofit organizations that provide medically tailored meals and groceries, medical nutrition therapy and nutrition counseling and education to people in communities across the country living with severe and chronic illnesses. FIMC works to advance equitable access to these life-saving interventions through policy change, research and evaluation, and best practices. FIMC agencies created the medically tailored meal intervention over 40 years ago, leading to the recent FIMC Accreditation Program which synthesizes decades of quality service provisions into a standard that is central to scaling equitable access to these life saving interventions. Read more [here](#).

Rockefeller Foundation - Since 2019, The Rockefeller Foundation has backed initiatives to support Food is Medicine programs and deepen our collective understanding of their potential. This year, the Foundation committed \$100 million to advance Food is Medicine, including supporting vital research like the American Heart Association’s Health Care by Food Initiative and initiated a partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to speed the integration of Food Is Medicine into health systems.

Tufts’ Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy – Tufts engages in multiple large food is medicine research studies in collaboration with health care systems, researchers, policy makers and others. Tufts Food is Medicine Institute is a university-wide collaborative effort based at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, bringing together experts from across disciplines with other local and national collaborators to advance food is medicine research, training, patient care, and community and policy engagement.

### **Member Spotlights**

*Below is a selection of TRCC’s members working to further Food is Medicine research and programs.*

Community Servings - Community Servings works to actively engage the community to provide scratch-made medically tailored meals to individuals and their families experiencing critical or chronic illness and nutrition insecurity. Through medically tailored meals, nutrition education and counseling, and food service job training, Community Servings aims to create a world in which everyone has access to the nutritious food they need for health and wellbeing as a fundamental right.

God’s Love We Deliver- God’s Love We Deliver works to improve the health and well-being of people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other serious illnesses by alleviating hunger and malnutrition. Through preparation and delivery of nutritious, high-quality meals, God’s Love is able to serve nutrition to people who, because of their illness, are unable to provide or prepare meals for themselves. In addition, God’s Love provides illness-specific nutrition education and counseling to our clients, families, care providers and other service organizations.

American College of Lifestyle Medicine - For over 20 years ACLM has been at the forefront of equipping clinicians with comprehensive food as medicine knowledge and practical tools firmly grounded in rigorous scientific research to effect systemic change. ACLM serves as a bridge between the concepts of “food as medicine,” emphasizing the therapeutic potential of healthy eating habits, and “food in medicine,” highlighting the integration of nutrition within the healthcare system to improve patient outcomes.