



April 6, 2017

Dear New York Common Pantry Community,

We will step up.

The recently released Federal budget proposal is full of cuts to certain programs that greatly impact those we serve at New York Common Pantry, and we know we are in for some difficult times ahead. For example, according to the New York State Department of Health, the proposed American Health Care Act recently voted down would have most greatly impacted poor and elderly New Yorkers. An estimated 2.7 million New Yorkers, of whom almost 60% are residents of New York City, would have lost health care coverage if the repeal of the Affordable Care Act was enacted.

We remain committed to serving every person who walks through our doors at New York Common Pantry. We will turn no one away and make sure everyone is given a fighting chance to succeed, to have adequate resources so they can have proper nutrition, pay their bills and send their children to school ready to learn. We know you care, and are here to remind you that we will continue to do these things, no matter how hard the times are ahead. Put simply: We will step up.

We recognize there will be continued deliberation and compromise as elected representatives establish their response and priorities. The proposed cuts, if enacted, will decimate an already frayed social safety net. Even today, that net does not adequately address the needs of New Yorkers, including working families and immigrants. Such support can include food from pantries and soup kitchens, resources like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and critical housing subsidies or vouchers funded by states through the Community Development Block Grant.

Proposed cuts to these programs will exacerbate the needs of millions of New Yorkers. According to a study by University of Washington, the hourly wage needed to support a family with one parent and one preschooler in New York City was between \$25.37 and \$39.15 an hour in 2014. It is likely this has gone up in the three intervening years, even after recent wage increases in New York City to \$12.00 an hour for Fast Food Workers, and \$11.00 for other industries. This gap is impossible to make up without some sort of other help or assistance. Further cuts to SNAP benefits, which recipients often spend in three weeks or less into each month, will only cause more poverty, poor nutrition, and exacerbate health conditions for those living on low incomes. In fact, a study published in the journal of Health Affairs in 2014

documented that poor people with diabetes were 27% more likely to go to the hospital for dangerously low blood sugar, a condition known as hypoglycemia, at the end of the month when supplemental income runs dry and food budgets are tight. Researchers found no increase in such hospitalizations among higher-income people.

Cuts to SNAP benefits are also linked in the research to increased use of emergency rooms and services for urgent care. This is concerning, but even more so if the Affordable Care Act is replaced by something resembling the legislation referred to above that was recently proposed and ultimately pulled by Congress. In fact, some politicians voiced displeasure that the bill had not gone far enough.

During these challenging times we know those we serve will struggle to make ends meet, get the coverage they need and deserve, and maintain a healthy lifestyle. At New York Common Pantry we will continue to support fair and just policies, and serve those in need. We will step up. Thank you for helping us do so.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen Grimaldi".

Stephen Grimaldi
Executive Director