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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA LAUNCHES FOOD AS HEALTH INITIATIVE WITH SUPPORT FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

Nonprofit health plan commits $600,000 for a statewide initiative; Alameda County Community Food Bank is first collaboration with $300,000 support to improve health and well-being

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OAKLAND, Calif. (Sept. 28, 2026) – Blue Shield of California today announced a new statewide "Food as Health" initiative that will provide $600,000 to seven California food-security nonprofits.

The investments will support medically tailored meals, culturally congruent resources, family nutrition programs, and other community-based solutions that connect healthcare and nutrition to improve health outcomes and advance equitable access to care. This initiative reflects the nonprofit health plan's commitment to addressing the social drivers of health, combating chronic disease, improving access to nutritious food, and advancing long-term healthcare affordability.

As the first investment under Blue Shield's new statewide Food as Health initiative, Blue Shield and Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) today announced a $300,000 multi-year investment to expand the food bank's Food as Medicine program, which

provides home-delivered, medically supportive food and nutrition education to eligible Medi-Cal members managing chronic conditions.

Blue Shield is the program's first and largest corporate sponsor investment, helping Alameda County Community Food Bank's pioneering Food as Medicine program to serve more people and strengthen the infrastructure, data collection, and evaluation needed to sustain and expand the program.

"Nutritious food is one of the foundations of good health," said Mike Stuart, president and CEO of Blue Shield of California. "As a nonprofit health plan, we have an important role to play in helping people live healthier lives. Access to healthy food can improve health outcomes, help prevent and manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, and support more affordable healthcare over the long term. We're proud to partner with Alameda County Community Food Bank to help build healthier communities and healthier futures."

The announcement was made during a volunteer event at the food bank's Oakland facility, where Blue Shield employees assembled Food as Medicine boxes and welcome kits for program participants. Leaders from both organizations, community stakeholders, and participants gathered to celebrate the program's impact and the role of nutrition in improving health outcomes.

Food as Medicine participants receive 12 weeks of home-delivered, medically supportive food, including fresh produce, proteins, healthy pantry staples, and nutrition education. Developed from a successful diabetes prevention pilot, the program expanded to support people with chronic conditions and became the first food bank in California to leverage funding from California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) to provide medically supportive food to eligible Medi-Cal members. Since 2024, the program has grown from an initial cohort of 20 participants to serving more than 400 people annually, reflecting growing demand for nutrition-based approaches that complement traditional medical care.

"Serving as a food justice organization means pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a food bank," said Regi Young, executive director of Alameda County Community Food Bank. "Food insecurity is one part of a complex picture impacting our community — and our Food as Medicine program addresses the intersection between our core work and healthcare. As our first and largest corporate sponsor for the program, Blue Shield's investment will expand our existing model and be a catalyst to share this model with other partners, potentially reshaping how chronic disease is addressed in the future."

The Alameda County Community Food Bank investment is the first of seven investments that will be awarded through Blue Shield's Food as Health initiative. Additional investments supporting food-security organizations across California will be announced in the coming months.

About Blue Shield of California

Blue Shield of California strives to create a healthcare system worthy of its family and friends that is sustainably affordable. The health plan is a taxpaying, nonprofit, independent member of the Blue Shield Association with nearly 6 million members, 6,800 employees, and more than $28 billion in annual revenue. Founded in 1939 in San Francisco and now headquartered in Oakland, Blue Shield of California and its affiliates provide health, dental, vision, Medicaid, and Medicare healthcare service plans in California. The company has contributed more than $60 million to the Blue Shield of California Foundation in the last three years to have an impact on California communities. For more news about Blue Shield of California, please visit news.blueshieldca.com. Or follow us on LinkedIn or Facebook.

About Alameda County Community Food Bank

Alameda County Community Food Bank has been at the forefront of hunger relief efforts in the Bay Area since 1985. The Food Bank serves a community in which 1 in 4 residents experiences some level of food insecurity. The Food Bank's core work includes distributing food through a network of more than 350 food pantries, meal programs, and other community organizations, as well as direct distribution programs including school-based and home delivery distributions. The Food Bank annually distributes the equivalent of ~50 million meals worth of food. In addition to its extensive emergency food programming, ACCFB's hunger-relief efforts include California's largest CalFresh (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) outreach department, anti-hunger advocacy, food as medicine, and food recovery and sustainability efforts. Alameda County Community Food Bank was named Feeding America's Food Bank of the Year in 2016; is an accredited charity by the Better Business Bureau; and for 17 consecutive years has received a Four Star rating from Charity Navigator

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