

**MEDIA RELEASE**

April 1, 2024

April is Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Month in Public Health's 2024 Initiative

Kern County Public Health has embarked on a year-long health initiative we call "A Healthier Kern – One Heart at a Time." This initiative highlights ten health-related challenges and provides awareness and education to empower our residents to be healthier while showcasing Public Health programs and services.

This month we spotlight food insecurity and malnutrition as one of our top health challenges. In Kern County, more than 117,000 people do not know if they will be able to get enough food to eat or where their next meal is coming from. Almost 50,000 children in Kern County are food insecure. Additionally, almost 40% of children report they are not getting the recommended two or more servings of fruit per day while more than 80% of teenagers report eating less than five servings of fruit or vegetables per day.

Good [nutrition](#) is essential in keeping us healthy! In fact, people with healthy eating patterns live longer and are at lower risk for serious health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. For people with chronic diseases, healthy eating can help manage these conditions and prevent complications.

To help address hunger and malnutrition in our community, Public Health has the [Waste Hunger Not Food](#) program that collects uneaten wholesome food from local schools and redistributes free throughout Kern County to those in need. Since our 2018 launch, not only has Public Health forged partnerships with more than 11 school districts to rescue food that would otherwise be thrown away, but we also work with dozens of local churches and non-profits to get this fresh food to our most vulnerable community members. To date, 3,452,390 pounds of food has been rescued in this program and given to our local families.

###

Grounded in Health