

It's Time to Close the **SNAP**Gap

Reduce Hunger. Improve Health. Support the Economy.

April 11, 2019

Honorable House Members:

We write today to ask you to **support an amendment to the FY20 House Ways and Means Budget being filed by Representative Jay Livingstone**. The language (below) would require EOHHS to launch a *pilot* allowing both MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program applicants with very low-income to file an application for SNAP *at the same time* as their health care application. The amendment would also task the Administration with identifying the costs of implementing this initiative.

The SNAP Gap/Common App legislation enjoys the **bipartisan/bicameral support of 116 Members** of the General Court, S. 678, H.1173: *An Act improving public health through a common application for core food, health and safety-net programs*. We are grateful to all our co-sponsors.

As you know, the “SNAP GAP” refers to the over 700,000 individuals in Massachusetts who are currently MassHealth recipients and are likely eligible for SNAP but are not receiving the benefit. The average SNAP benefit for a household in MA is \$213 per month. Ensuring that as many low-income families as possible have access to adequate food reduces health care costs, improves educational outcomes, and has long-term positive effects. Furthermore, the establishment of a common application would result in increased state government efficiency and would bring in approximately \$1.2B in federal dollars that we are currently forgoing.

We look forward to working with you throughout this legislative session to close the SNAP GAP in the Commonwealth. We hope you will join with Rep. Livingstone today to co-sponsor this amendment. If so, please contact legislative aide Caitlin Duffy in Rep. Livingstone’s office by noon on Friday, April 12th: Caitlin.Duffy@mahouse.gov or 617/722-2013.

Sincerely,

The Massachusetts SNAP Gap Coalition

**Rep. Jay Livingstone’s FY20 budget amendment:
Amending to EOHHS line item 4000-0300**

provided further, that the executive office shall establish a pilot to allow low-income applicants and recipients of MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program the option to initiate an application for federally-funded supplemental nutrition assistance benefits at the same time as their application or renewal for MassHealth or Medicare Savings Program; provided further, the executive office shall ensure that eligibility information and verifications provided by the applicant or recipient that are relevant to said nutrition program is transferred from MassHealth to the Department of Transitional Assistance for use in their determination of eligibility; provided further, the executive office shall provide a report no later than October 1, 2019 to the executive office of administration and finance and the house and senate committees for ways and means on the additional costs and federal reimbursement opportunities involved in a common application portal for all MassHealth and Medicare Savings Program applicants and recipients with gross incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level.