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June 25, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to urge the Senate to preserve and protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as you vote to reauthorize the farm bill. SNAP is considered to be the country's most effective anti-hunger program and is essential to the nation's nutrition safety net. It helps one in eight Americans afford a basic diet, with most SNAP participants being children, seniors, or people with disabilities. Protecting the integrity and assuring the quality of SNAP guarantees that it will continue to serve as the nation's defense against hunger.

The AMA has long-standing policy supporting improvements to SNAP and other food assistance programs, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, that are designed to promote adequate nutrient intake and reduce food insecurity and obesity as well as ensure that federal subsidies incentivize healthful foods. Reauthorization of SNAP was a topic recently discussed at the AMA's Annual Meeting, which includes delegates representing over 170 state and national medical specialty societies. During this meeting, new policy was adopted that calls on Congress to preserve and protect SNAP through the reauthorization of the farm bill in order for Americans to live healthy and productive lives.

The AMA believes that the "Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018" (S. 3042) would strengthen SNAP and avoid harming SNAP households, as opposed to the House-passed farm bill's SNAP provisions, which could cut or end benefits for more than two million individuals. We urge the Senate to reject any amendments to the Senate farm bill that would weaken its SNAP provisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD