



Advocacy Guidebook & Toolkit

*Supporting Rhode Island's Food As Medicine (FAM)
Legislation (S2892/H8171)*

Welcome

Welcome to Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island's *Food Is Medicine Advocacy Guidebook & Toolkit*. This resource is designed to help you advocate and advance the state of Food Is Medicine.

Across Rhode Island, individuals, families, and healthcare providers are already seeing the impact of nutrition-based interventions on chronic disease management and overall well-being. Your voice and engagement are essential to building a healthier, more equitable future for our state.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing policies that recognize nutrition as a critical component of healthcare.

Purpose of This Toolkit

This toolkit equips advocates, community partners, healthcare providers, and individuals with lived experience with the tools needed to support **Food As Medicine (FAM)** legislation in Rhode Island.

While “**Food Is Medicine**” refers to the broader, evidence-based movement integrating nutrition into healthcare, Rhode Island legislation (S2892/H8171) uses the term “**Food As Medicine.**” This toolkit uses both intentionally:

- **Food As Medicine (FAM):** Refers to the legislation
- **Food Is Medicine:** Refers to the broader field and evidence base

Inside, you'll find:

- Background on the legislation
- Key talking points
- Rhode Island-specific evidence
- Sample testimony and outreach scripts

Background: S2892 / H8171

Food As Medicine Pilot Program

S2892/H8171 would establish a **Food As Medicine (FAM) Task Force** and authorize the development of a **Medicaid-focused pilot program** administered by the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

The task force would bring together:

- State agencies
- Healthcare providers
- Insurers
- Academic experts
- Community-based organizations

Its role would be to:

- Identify best practices
- Define priority populations
- Develop recommendations for a targeted, evidence-based pilot

This legislation represents a **measured, data-driven first step**, ensuring future investments are fiscally responsible and aligned with Medicaid goals.

Legislative Sponsors & Key Committees

Primary Sponsors

- Sen. Victoria Gu (D)
- Rep. Justine Caldwell (D)

Committee Leadership

- Senate Health and Human Services Committee
 - Chair: Sen. Melissa Murray
- House Finance Committee
 - Chair: Rep. Marvin Abney

Why This Matters Now

Rhode Island is uniquely positioned to lead in Food Is Medicine.

As outlined in Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island's 2026 policy brief, **medically tailored meals and nutrition interventions can improve health outcomes, reduce avoidable healthcare utilization, and lower costs**, particularly for Medicaid populations with chronic conditions.

This legislation builds on:

- Existing programs already operating in Rhode Island
- Established provider infrastructure
- Growing national momentum around Medicaid-supported nutrition interventions

Rather than starting from scratch, S2892/H8171 creates a **coordinated, strategic pathway forward.**

Key Talking Points

About Food Is Medicine

- **Food Is Medicine** is an evidence-based approach that integrates nutritious food and nutrition services into healthcare to prevent, manage, and treat chronic disease.
- Interventions such as **medically tailored meals** are designed specifically for individuals with serious health conditions and are delivered alongside medical care.
- These interventions have been shown to:
 - Improve disease management
 - Reduce hospitalizations
 - Support independent living
- National estimates suggest medically tailored meals could save **up to \$24 billion annually** in healthcare costs.
- In Rhode Island, **6 in 10 adults live with at least one chronic condition**, highlighting the need for innovative, cost-effective solutions.

Evidence from Rhode Island

- **Rhode Island already has active Food Is Medicine programs**, including medically tailored meal delivery for high-risk populations.
- Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island provides nutrition interventions to individuals with:
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Kidney disease
 - Complex medical and social needs

Key Talking Points - Continued

- These programs demonstrate:
 - Improved health outcomes
 - Reduced strain on caregivers
 - Greater ability for individuals to remain at home
- The state has **existing infrastructure and expertise**, making it well-positioned to scale these efforts.

About the Legislation

- S2892/H8171 establishes a **Food As Medicine (FAM) Task Force** to guide a Medicaid pilot program.
- The bill is a **responsible first step**—focused on planning, coordination, and evidence-building, not large-scale spending.
- The task force ensures that any pilot program is:
 - Data-driven
 - Cost-effective
 - Targeted to populations with the greatest need
- The initiative aligns with Medicaid’s core goals:
 - Lowering healthcare costs
 - Improving population health
 - Advancing health equity

Often referred to as ‘Food Is Medicine,’ this legislation uses the term ‘Food As Medicine’ to describe a Medicaid-focused pilot program that integrates nutrition into healthcare delivery.

Top Actions You Can Take

-  **Contact your State Senator and Representative** and urge them to support S2892/H8171
-  **Submit written testimony** to relevant committee in support of the legislation
-  **Call committee members** using the provided script
-  **Share your story or professional experience**
-  **Encourage your organization or network to engage**

Not sure who represents you? Visit the Rhode Island Voter Information Center: <https://vote.sos.ri.gov>

Voicemail Script

Hello, my name is [Name], and I'm a constituent from [City/Town].

I'm calling to express support for S2892/H8171, the Food As Medicine pilot program.

[One sentence about who you are or who you serve.]

This bill would establish a Food As Medicine task force to develop a data-driven, fiscally responsible Medicaid pilot that improves health outcomes and advances health equity.

I respectfully urge your support.

Thank you for your time.

Sample Written Testimony

Senate Version

Re: Support for S2892/H8171 – Relating to Health and Safety – Food As Medicine Pilot Program

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of [Organization/Individual], and as a constituent from [City/Town], I write in strong support of S2892, the Food As Medicine Pilot Program Act.

[Brief introduction: who you are and your connection]

This legislation establishes a Food As Medicine Task Force to guide a targeted Medicaid pilot program. It builds on existing programs in Rhode Island and ensures future investments are data-driven and fiscally responsible.

[Personal or professional perspective]

I respectfully urge the committee to support and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,
[Name / Title]

House Version

Re: Support for S2892/H8171 – Relating to Health and Safety – Food As Medicine Pilot Program

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of [Organization/Individual], and as a constituent from [City/Town], I write in strong support of S2892, the Food As Medicine Pilot Program Act.

[Brief introduction: who you are and your connection]

This legislation establishes a Food As Medicine Task Force to guide a targeted Medicaid pilot program. It builds on existing programs in Rhode Island and ensures future investments are data-driven and fiscally responsible.

[Personal or professional perspective]

I respectfully urge the committee to support and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,
[Name / Title]

Resources

- **Meals on Wheels of RI – Food Is Medicine Program**
<https://www.rimeals.org/programs/food-is-medicine/>
- **Meals on Wheels of RI - Advocacy in Action**
<https://www.rimeals.org/programs/advocacy/>
- **2026 Policy Brief: Advancing Food Is Medicine in Rhode Island: The Role of Medically Tailored Meals**
https://www.rimeals.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Web_Advancing_FIM_RI.pdf
- **Rhode Island Voter Information Center** - <https://vote.sos.ri.gov>
- **Links to Legislation**
 - **House Bill H8171:**
<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText26/HouseText26/H8171.pdf>
 - **Senate Bill S2892:**
<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText26/SenateText26/S2892.pdf>

Contact to Get Involved

Your experience matters.

If you are interested in sharing your story or supporting this effort, please contact:

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