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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CALOPTIMA ADDRESSES FOOD INSECURITY AMONG MEMBERS
BY PROMOTING CALFRESH ENROLLMENT**

Board allocates \$2 million to raise awareness of food benefits for members

ORANGE, Calif. (March 8, 2022) — Considering increasing food prices and the continued impact of the pandemic, CalOptima has identified that more than 340,000 members may be eligible to access nutritious foods by enrolling in CalFresh, which provides monthly food benefits for eligible low-income people. In a unique collaboration to increase CalFresh membership, CalOptima is working with the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) to streamline the enrollment process through an improved phone line transfer between the agencies.

On March 3, CalOptima’s Board of Directors approved up to \$2 million for a CalFresh awareness campaign to combat rising food insecurity in its member population. The campaign will encourage enrollment through mail, phone and text message outreach; special events at grocery stores and food banks; and enrollment promotion through health networks, providers and community-based organizations. Depending on their income and expenses, an individual may receive up to \$250 and a family of four up to \$835 through a CalFresh debit-type card.

“Eating more nutritious food brings significant health benefits, and CalOptima is committed to helping our members access CalFresh to support their overall well-being,” said Richard Pitts, D.O., Ph.D., CalOptima Chief Medical Officer. “This campaign is just one example of how CalOptima is addressing the social determinants of health, which are the non-medical factors that affect members’ lives. Supporting the whole person is a major focus of current efforts to transform and strengthen Medi-Cal.”

“Food insecurity among our most vulnerable Orange County residents worsened during the pandemic,” said Supervisor Andrew Do, Chair of the CalOptima Board of Directors. “As the single largest health insurer in Orange County, CalOptima helps members access the community resources they need to live healthier lives, including having a reliable way to purchase fresher, less processed food options.”

CalOptima members and others can enroll at www.getcalfresh.org.

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About CalOptima

A county organized health system, CalOptima provides publicly funded health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima’s mission is to provide members with access to quality health care services delivered in a cost-effective and compassionate manner. In total, CalOptima serves more than 870,000 members with a network of nearly 9,400 primary care doctors and specialists as well as 41 acute and rehab hospitals.