FOOD IS MEDICINE:

CDPHP and Healthy Alliance IPA Partner with The Food Pantries for the Capital District To Improve Member Health by Tackling Food Insecurity

Albany, NY – July 15, 2020 – CDPHP and Healthy Alliance Independent Practice Association (Healthy Alliance IPA) today announced a partnership with The Food Pantries for the Capital District to improve the health of CDPHP members by connecting them with healthy, reliable food sources.

The partnership – a first-of-its-kind in the region – will identify CDPHP Medicaid members who are at-risk for food insecurity, then recommend one of the below paths:

- **Food Pantry Plus** – food pantry package that includes fresh produce, lean meats and whole grain items, plus milk and egg cards redeemable at local grocers.

- **Medically-Tailored Food Packages** – food pantry packages tailored for medical conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension. Nutritional education and support will also be provided.

- **Healthy Prepared Meals** – delivery of two healthy prepared meals per day, with hot and cold options, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **Food Pantry On-The-Go** – food pantry delivery option that can be added to Food Pantry Plus or Medically-Tailored Food Packages.

CDPHP will work with its members and health care providers to identify those who are food insecure. Then, representatives from Healthy Alliance IPA and The Food Pantries for the Capital District will work directly with those individuals to tailor a meal plan that meets their health care needs.

Currently, more than 80,000 people (10 percent of the population) are considered food insecure in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties. Lack of proper nutrition can lead to serious

health complications, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and cancer — and causes a major strain on health systems nationwide.

Numerous studies have also shown that just 20 percent of a person's health is determined by traditional health care or the care they receive in a doctor's office. That means the remaining 80 percent is determined by social issues, such as food, housing, transportation and other socio-economic factors.

"At CDPHP, we understand that if a mother or father cannot put healthy food on the table, there is a good chance they are not thinking about basic health care needs like immunizations, well child visits, dental screenings and more," said **CDPHP president and CEO, Dr. John Bennett.** "By eliminating food insecurity, we are removing one of the roadblocks to good health."

This dual-pronged approach is aimed at not just feeding those who are food insecure but setting individuals up on a path toward a healthier life — one that will diminish the chances of developing long-term health complications. Members who are eligible for the program will receive wraparound care to ensure they receive routine health screenings, immunizations, care management and more.

"We are honored to be launching this important initiative with CDPHP and The Food Pantries for the Capital District. Our organization's purpose is to improve the health of the people in our community and there is no better way to do that than to make sure that food is available to those who need it," **Jacob Reider, MD, CEO of Healthy Alliance IPA.** "Too often, our society *reacts to* problems rather than *prevent* them. This program *prevents* problems — in a way that will create longstanding benefits for our community."

Food insecurity and racial inequities have been thrust to the forefront of the public dialogue in 2020. It is commonly understood that minorities and individuals in poorer communities are more prone to serious health issues, in addition to food insecurity.

"With more than one in 10 of our New York Capital Region neighbors struggling with food insecurity, access to healthy food is critical to preventing chronic diseases and maintaining a higher quality of life with a chronic condition. Thank you to CDPHP and Healthy Alliance IPA for investing in The Food Pantries' innovative systemic approach through social care to prevent and treat chronic diseases through consistent access to healthy food," said **Natasha Pernicka, Executive Director, The Food Pantries for the Capital District.**

CDPHP Medicaid members and their health care providers can inquire about eligibility for the program by contacting the CDPHP Care Team at 1-888-94-CDPHP (2374).

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About Alliance for Better Health
Established in 2015, Alliance for Better Health and its daughter organization Healthy Alliance IPA, collaborate with community partners to address social needs before they turn into costly, medical problems. With more than 100 partners in New York's Tech Valley and Capital Region, Alliance prioritizes *building health equity for all*. For more information about Healthy Alliance IPA and Alliance for Better Health's mission, please visit https://abhealth.us/.

About CDPHP®
Established in 1984, CDPHP is a physician-founded, member-focused and community-based not-for-profit health plan that offers high-quality affordable health insurance plans to members in 26 counties throughout New York. CDPHP is also on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.