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October 26, 2023

Ms. Catherine Oakar, MPH  
Special Assistant to the President for Community Public Health and Disparities  
Domestic Policy Council  
Executive Office of the President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Oakar,

Walmart's mission is to help our customers and members save money and live better. The role we play in providing families with affordable, nutritious foods they need and want to live healthy and successful lives is a very important part of that mission.

We are excited to share our business initiatives and significant investments in combating hunger, promoting nutrition security, and improving health. These are built on the initiatives and investments we shared with you last September, in alignment with the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. Building on over a decade of leadership in improving food security and nutrition education, our commitments have included actions to address food access and affordability, reformulate products to decrease sodium and trans fats, encourage healthier eating with front-of-pack labeling and nutrition education, and funding efforts to provide food to people in need.

Overall, we aim to expand access to healthier food for millions of Americans and empower community organizations and advocates to better the outcomes for millions more. You will find that work, organized by the Conference pillar to which it applies, below.

### **Pillar 1: Improve Food Access and Affordability**

- A. *Walmart is committed to supporting innovative, digital mechanisms that help customers access and use supplemental nutrition benefits when they shop with us.*

Walmart supports digitization of the food access system to help address gaps and challenges related to food and nutrition insecurity. We have also worked to improve access to online groceries for all customers. For example, we worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and state agencies to allow customers to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for online grocery shopping. Currently, SNAP benefits can be used for grocery pickup and delivery orders in 50 states via Walmart.com. We want to make the experience as seamless as possible for our SNAP customers. When customers are shopping for grocery items on Walmart.com, they can select a filter to just view Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) or SNAP-eligible items and can easily identify EBT-eligible products through clear badging on the item and search pages. Then customers can simply use their EBT or SNAP debit cards to pay at checkout.

Walmart is an authorized vendor of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Additionally, Walmart has announced its participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's and Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition's WIC online pilot program. The pilot is designed to make it easier and more convenient for customers to order and pay for WIC-eligible items online using

their EBT cards. The overarching goal of this project is to work toward establishing recommendations for the implementation of processes that allow WIC participants to use online ordering to receive their WIC food benefits. We expect the pilot to inform a pathway for national expansion to create greater WIC program efficiencies and improved access for customers.

In July 2023, Walmart launched Walmart+ Assist, which is designed to assist customers who receive government assistance. Under this program, qualifying government assistance recipients enjoy Walmart+ for half the price—\$ 6.47/month, or \$49/year. Walmart+ Assist members enjoy every Walmart+ benefit, which includes free grocery deliveries, free shipping, and gas discounts.

*B. The Walmart Foundation is committed to scaling organizations and programs that leverage the power of technology to increase access to charitable food and nutritional safety-net benefits.*

In 2022, the Walmart Foundation awarded over \$14 million in grants to support Feeding America's efforts to increase access to innovative digital platforms that promote transparency in the food donation, rescue, and pickup processes. This investment built upon the Walmart Foundation's earlier support to Feeding America for the development of MealConnect, which facilitates restaurants and businesses donating their surplus food to local food banks. Through MealConnect, food that previously might have gone to waste is recovered and immediately directed to agency partners who directly distribute it to families in need. More recently, the Foundation's investment supported the launch and expansion of OrderAhead, Feeding America's click-and-collect food app that is a fast, private, and easy way to order free groceries online. OrderAhead helps people in need overcome barriers related to transportation, stigma, and time when seeking food assistance.

Additionally, the Walmart Foundation has supported the digitalization of safety net programs through nonprofit organizations like Benefits Data Trust, which works to connect people with essential services like SNAP and WIC. Further, the Walmart Foundation is a founding investor in Code for America's Integrated Benefits initiative, which works to transform the nutrition safety net nationwide by addressing barriers to enrollment, usage, and retention in social safety net programs, including SNAP and WIC.

In FY 2023, Walmart and Sam's stores, clubs, and distribution centers in the U.S. donated more than 665 million pounds of food to Feeding America, 57% of which were fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats.

## **Pillar 2: Integrate Nutrition and Health**

*A. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to providing greater accessibility to health and wellness resources to reduce health disparities by investing in research, organizations, and innovative practices aimed at improving health outcomes.*

Walmart has a robust health and wellness offering including pharmacies, optical services, and in-store health kiosks in thousands of locations, and an expanding network of Walmart Health Centers. Walmart Health has opened 50+ health centers in AR, FL, GA, IL, and TX, with more opening in 2024. Walmart is active in helping to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare by operating 4,000 stores located in medically underserved areas as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), operating specialty pharmacies in those communities, and advocating for public policies to reduce access gaps.

In mid-2020, Walmart established four Shared Value Networks (SVNs) to help advance racial equity in the U.S. criminal justice, education, financial, and health care systems, with a particular focus on disparities affecting Black and African American people. Each SVN team, comprised of Walmart associates, was charged with studying these national systems and pursuing business strategies that draw on Walmart capabilities to contribute to positive and lasting change in the systems. The SVNs made

recommendations to the SVN Steering Committee, led by Doug McMillon, President and CEO of Walmart Inc., to discuss and align on potential business initiatives. The Health SVN sought to create opportunities for all—including our associates, customers, and community members—to live healthier by improving equity and driving systems change. Building on the strong momentum created by the SVNs, in August 2023, Walmart embedded the SVN work into its business functions, with a focus on improving access to healthier food options for communities experiencing food insecurity.

Also, beginning in 2020, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation committed \$100 million over five years through the Walmart.Org Center for Racial Equity to support efforts such as research, advocacy, innovation of practices and tools, stakeholder convening, and non-profit capacity building. Since then, the Center has invested \$58 million to complement and extend the societal impact of Walmart's business initiatives to advance racial equity within four focus areas: education, finance, health, and criminal justice, with a focus on building more equitable outcomes for the Black and African American communities.

*B. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to addressing food and nutrition security to improve patient health outcomes.*

The Walmart Foundation's Healthier Food for All strategy focuses on improving health outcomes for people managing a chronic condition by integrating food and nutrition in healthcare, prioritizing investments in low income, low food access geographies. The strategy will support efforts to accelerate adoption of food as medicine, including advancing the knowledge base on how to design and implement effective programs, improve cultural responsiveness of programming, and increase coordination between food and healthcare sectors.

The Walmart Foundation provided Wholesome Wave a grant to support the development and implementation of its new FED (Fidelity, Equity, and Dignity) Principle of its produce prescription programs. Establishing the FED framework allows Wholesome Wave to expand and elevate its racial and cultural sensitivity to its work. The takeaways of this program were to expand store options, extend the program length, and increase financial amounts on the vouchers. Also, the Center for Racial Equity supports community-based innovation to identify solutions that increase food access in under-resourced communities. To support community-driven food access solutions at scale, the Center is also focused on increasing access to public and private capital and building capacity for organizations and entrepreneurs. For example, in FY 2021, the Walmart Foundation invested \$5 million in the American Heart Association's Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund to back community-based organizations and entrepreneurs in Atlanta and Chicago who are working to increase access to affordable and healthier food in communities of color. According to the American Heart Association, the food entrepreneurs and organizations who received investments from the Bernard J. Tyson Impact Fund have reached over 460,000 individuals, created 71 healthy food access points, and grown over 186,000 pounds of fresh food within low-income and food insecure communities. The organizations also have received over \$10 million in follow-on funding.

Walmart recently participated in an 8-month fruit and vegetable incentive program developed by Wholesome Wave in Sacramento. The fruit and vegetable incentive program was administered in a community clinic that serves a low-income population in Sacramento. Participants in the study received up to \$400 in fruit and vegetable vouchers (a reloadable Walmart gift card) over 8 months; \$50 in vouchers given per household each month. Additionally, Walmart is a nationwide participating retailer in About Fresh's Fresh Connect. This tech-enabled food prescription program uses payment technology to assist customers with easier access to purchasing healthier foods, and collaborates with healthcare providers to help ensure compliance and a seamless enrollment process. Walmart is also a participating retailer in the DC Greens produce prescription program. Under the DC Greens program, healthcare providers prescribe fruit and vegetables to their patients diagnosed with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or hypertension. Patients are given monthly funds to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating grocery store locations. Participants can use their cards to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at any participating retailer, including Walmart, in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Walmart also has partnered with Season Health, a food as medicine platform that partners with health plans to provide food and nutrition benefits for members, specifically targeted at chronic diseases like diabetes and kidney disease. Season Health helps their patients obtain ingredients delivered from retailers, including Walmart. Walmart is a preferred retailer in the program, having been recently approved for online pickup and delivery access to make the Walmart delivery integration more seamless.

*C. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation support efforts designed to address health disparities and maternal and cardiometabolic health.*

The Walmart Foundation continues to invest in research and interventions that aim to improve maternal and infant health and cardiometabolic health outcomes through nutrition programming, with a particular focus on improving health outcomes in Black communities.

Walmart seeks to promote health equity, address gaps in care, and promote positive health behavior by providing equitable access to healthier food, tools, and nutrition support. For instance, Walmart and CareSource have partnered on a maternal and child health program for expecting mothers or mothers who are less than 12-months post-partum and enrolled in CareSource's Medicaid managed care plan. Participants will receive monthly funds to spend on food, a no-cost Walmart+ membership, and access to Walmart in-store Community Health Resource Specialists and telenutrition services to assist them in navigating their health care journeys.

To support these programs, we have developed Walmart Everyday Health Signals for participants who opt-in to the linking of personalized insights from their purchasing behavior with Walmart's programs for healthy behaviors. In August 2023, Walmart launched a healthy-eating pilot program in two Walmart Health Center locations in Florida. Participants are Walmart shoppers who are also health center patients with cardiometabolic conditions. The pilot is designed to assess the impact of insights from Walmart's Everyday Health Signals on healthy behavior changes through the regular engagement of a registered dietitian and community health resource specialist who use these insights to provide personalized, affordable, and customer friendly recommendations for nutrition improvement as well as optional in-store shopping sessions.

Additionally, Walmart is participating in the National Association of Chain Drug Stores' (NACDS) "Nourish my Health" program, a national public education campaign focused on helping Americans embrace the protective health benefits that nutritious food provides in reducing the risk of diet-related conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, and many types of cancer. This campaign was conceived and developed as a commitment by NACDS to the 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

### **Pillar 3: Empower All Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices**

*A. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to advancing customer-friendly and evidence-backed nutrition content and experiences to empower consumers and communities to make healthy choices.*

Over 10 years ago, we introduced our Walmart U.S. Great for You icon for private-label products to make it easier for customers to make more nutritious food choices. Items with this label meet rigorous nutrition criteria informed by the latest nutrition science and authoritative guidance from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and National Academies of Medicine. Our Great For You standard has been evaluated by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and scored in the top tier of nutritional standards for highest consistency with the DGA.

In 2022, Walmart updated the Great for You nutrition criteria to match the 2020-2025 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As of April 2023, approximately 33% of items in fresh produce and food items across the Great Value, Marketside, Freshness Guaranteed, Prima Della, Clear American, and Parent's

Choice private brands satisfy the updated Great for You criteria. Also, in FY 2022, Walmart launched the Built for Better program which helps customers identify products that are made with the well-being of people and the planet in mind. The Built for Better and Great For You icons highlight more nutritious products or those that meet independent and authoritative standards that recognize products made without specific materials or ingredients customers may not want. Consistent with our mission to help people save money and live better, we focus on providing selection across a variety of dietary choices. For instance, for those seeking meat and dairy alternatives, we offer a variety of plant-based product choices; customers can also view the plant-based section on Walmart.com for breakfast foods, snacks, and other items.

The Walmart Foundation also continues to invest in customer friendly nutrition education programming. For example, in May 2022, the Walmart Foundation awarded a \$1.4 million grant to Sesame Workshop for their new bilingual resources to help families of all economic backgrounds foster healthy eating practices and increase 'nutritional literacy,' defined as, "the ability to access and understand information about food and nutrition." In 2022, FoodCorps was awarded a \$3.3 million, two-year grant to support their food education in schools program. The funding is designed to provide more than 240,000 children with customer friendly, hands-on food education and increased exposure to more nourishing foods in schools and at home.

#### **Pillar 5: Enhance Nutrition and Food Security Research**

- A. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to sharing learnings from funded research to advance the field's knowledge and promote best practices centered around equitable access to healthy food and nutrition education.*

In 2022, the Aspen Institute Food and Society Program, in partnership with the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School (CHLPI) and with support from the Walmart Foundation, released a Food is Medicine Research Action Plan, which outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations to expand and strengthen research on nutrition interventions in health care. The recommendations offer concrete guidance on how to embed equity throughout the Food is Medicine research continuum; identify key considerations to ensure that research designs are robust and appropriate for yielding the most valuable and actionable information; identify the most urgent questions that have yet to be explored; and describe how funders can support the most valuable research in the field.

- B. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to leveraging business and philanthropic investments to elevate industry research, innovations, and best practices that drive industry-wide improvement and systemic change.*

In 2020, the Walmart Foundation launched the Healthy Food Community of Practice as a space for connection, learning, resource sharing, and action for more than 35 organizations focused on improving healthier food access and consumption, particularly for people who face systemic barriers. Funded by the Walmart Foundation, the Community is facilitated by Share Our Strength through its subsidiary Community Wealth Partners. The Walmart Foundation will continue to support the Community of Practice through at least 2024.

Additionally, Walmart is rolling out specialized training in Health Equity to our Health and Wellness field associates, helping them to better understand and identify unique healthcare delivery issues in their communities. We also seek to increase the number of Health and Wellness providers in communities by offering our associates industry-focused education programs for pharmacy technicians and opticians, which includes an optician training program that will soon become available in all 50 states. Walmart also offers a pilot program in medical assistant certification and free pharmacy technician certification for eligible associates.



In 2022, Walmart launched the Walmart Healthcare Research Institute to increase community access to healthcare research that may help lead to safer, higher quality, and more equitable healthcare. The Institute focuses on innovative interventions and medications that can make a difference in underrepresented communities, including rural residents.

### **Conclusion**

Our work represents a concerted effort to meet the anti-hunger and nutritional needs of our customers and their communities, and to increase the availability of nutritious foods that lead to better health outcomes. Each also speaks to a particular goal shared by the President and this administration to improve the health of every American. Taken together, they represent a whole-of-business approach on the part of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation to center this work in our grocery business—work in lockstep with the aims of the White House Conference. We are committed to their success, and when paired with our scale, we believe that with that success will come a healthier America.

We stand ready to continue our partnership to ensure that outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce C. Harris".

Bruce C. Harris  
Vice President, Federal Government Affairs  
Walmart Inc.