Background

- 1 in 5 children in North Carolina are food insecure (FI) or lack consistent access to adequate food
- FI is linked to poor child and adult outcomes in several domains

The NC Early Childhood Action Plan aims to ensure all young children in NC are:

1) healthy
2) safe and nurtured
3) learning and ready to succeed

Key benchmarks in 10 target areas including FI.

North Carolina Integrated Care for Kids (NC InCK):
- Child-centered service delivery and payment model, aims to improve quality of care and reduce cost of care for children insured by Medicaid or CHIP
- 80,000-100,000 children, 5 NC counties (Alamance, Orange, Durham, Granville, Vance), 2020-2026
- Aims to:
  - Integrated care across core services areas e.g. clinical care, schools, food, housing, early care, child welfare, legal. Currently developing implementation strategies.

Objectives:
1) Describe cross-sector community-based resources and strategies to address FI for children in NC in order to inform NC ECAP planning
2) Apply findings to develop specific implementation recommendations to target FI in the NC InCK model

Data & Methods

- 34 informants in various sectors, including school, community, and government (Figure 1).
- Interview content: organizational information and services, changes due to COVID-19, referral and engagement processes, community engagement, gaps and potential solutions, and best practices for addressing FI with families

Key Findings: COVID-19 Specific

- Increased Food Need
- Weekend Pickup Sites
- Heightened Awareness
- Sustainability Concerns

"...COVID had really, has really awakened the public to the childhood nutrition issues."

Recommendations for NC InCK

- More holistically assess the needs of children
- Coordinate services across sectors for kids with high needs
- Design new ways of paying for care and outcomes

Systemic Recommendations:
- To increase enrollment in federal programs
- Host community conversations
- Families to resources by addressing access barriers

Next Steps:
- Recommendations to be delivered at community and policy levels in order to inform ECAP planning and InCK development/implementation

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