

including the effects of poor nutrition on acute and chronic illness of the elderly, the long-term effects of suboptimal nutrition for children and information on what makes a family nutritionally vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, 713,934 people in Maryland are living at 150% of the poverty level as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, The poor are directly or indirectly at risk of having less than satisfactory levels of food available which could result in inappropriate levels of nutrition; and

WHEREAS, The popular conception of "the poor" as a homogeneous, stable group with a similar set of attributes is not viable in the face of current economic fluctuations; and

WHEREAS, Increasing numbers of Marylanders must avail themselves of emergency food services, soup kitchens, and the Maryland Food Bank; and

WHEREAS, Many agencies having program responsibilities have been collecting data with little regular or ongoing interaction with other agencies consequently, this data is often not uniform or consistent; and

WHEREAS, Federal nutritional survey statistics represent a national sample which cannot be disaggregated to be meaningful at the State level; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene is requested to establish study the feasibility of establishing a Nutritional Surveillance Program within the Department to- by using and coordinating current available data from the Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program, nutrition programs for the elderly, the Food Stamp Program, and the School Lunch and Breakfast Program and to:

(1) determine the feasibility of assuming the responsibility to:

~~(1)--use--and--coordinate--currently--available--data--from--Feed Program--for--Women,--Infants--and--Children,--the--Early--Periodic Screening,--Diagnosis--and--Treatment--Program,--nutrition--programs for--the--elderly--and--the--Feed--Stamp--Program,~~

(2) (a) survey and assess on a continuing basis the dietary and nutritional status of the citizens of Maryland;

(3) (b) determine the level and extent of the problems in the population at risk for nutritional deficiencies and determine their continuing causes;