

ADVERTORIAL

COVID-19 | **STAY SAFE**
WELLMED CARES

*Dr. George Rapier is
the founder of WellMed*



My Fellow Americans,

As we anxiously await a COVID-19 vaccine, the world faces another pandemic-related crisis. Communities are pushed to the brink as food supplies in some places dwindle. Distribution is slowed. Food prices spike.¹

Hunger is not just in the developing world. It exists here in the United States. We must all help our friends, family and neighbors not go hungry.

Feeding America is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. It works with 200 food banks across the country. Feeding America reports more than 37 million Americans live in homes where hunger is a real concern. That includes 5.4 million seniors.²

That was pre-pandemic. At the start of the U.S. outbreak five months ago, food banks saw demand for meals increase 20%.² Feeding Tampa Bay, one of Florida's largest food banks, says requests jumped 400%.

Meals on Wheels is another incredible organization fighting hunger in our communities. It reports nearly 6,000 older adults are on a meal wait list in Texas and Florida.⁴ In March of this year, WellMed's employees and I donated \$1.5 million to the WellMed Charitable Foundation. The Foundation awards grants

to community Meals on Wheels programs in Texas, Florida and New Mexico. WellMed has delivered 184,000 meals in those states so far in 2020. I urge other corporations and foundations to do the same and support charities that feed neighbors in need.

I started WellMed 30 years ago to find a better way to deliver care to older adults. Truly improving health care goes well beyond the exam room. It involves overcoming barriers that keep people from getting and staying well, including nutrition. We all must do our part to put food on the table and eliminate hunger during this crisis.

To help, visit feedingamerica.org and mealsonwheelsamerica.org. You can also Google "food bank near me" and "meals on wheels near me" to find your local program.

WellMed CARES. I urge you to do the same.



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Remember: Don't delay care during the COVID-19 crisis. It's important to get the care you need for health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and COPD. It's also time to get a flu shot. It won't stop you from getting COVID-19, but it will help increase chances you won't suffer from both viruses. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older get a flu shot as early as September.

WellMed follows clear CDC guidance for patient safety in our clinics. If you are a WellMed patient and you need help arranging a visit, call your doctor today. Or, call us toll-free at **1-877-859-8347** Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Central Time.

If you are on a select Medicare Advantage health plan, you may be eligible for up to \$150 in gift cards for completing a preventive care screening and an annual wellness exam.

¹The hunger crisis linked to coronavirus could kill more than the disease itself, Oxfam warns, Francesca Giuliana-Hoffman, CNN - cnn.com/2020/07/12/us/hunger-crisis-deaths-coronavirus-oxfam-trnd/index.html

²feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Brief_Local%20Impact_5.19.2020.pdf

³SA Food Bank officials concerned demand may spike after several assistance programs end this week, KSAT-12, Sean Talbot, Assignments Manager, Jul 27, 2020 - ksat.com/news/local/2020/07/27/sa-food-bank-officials-concerned-demand-may-spike-after-several-assistance-programs-end-this-week/

⁴New Survey data: demand on Meals on Wheels National Network Swells and Wait Lists Grow Due to COVID-19 Pandemic - mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/national/press-room/news/2020/05/07/new-survey-data-demand-on-meals-on-wheels-national-network-swells-and-wait-lists-grow-due-to-covid-19-pandemic