

**Written Statement of Dr. Bob Chestnut,
Chief Medical Executive Director, Cummins Inc.**

**Hearing on Food as Medicine: Current Efforts and Potential Opportunities
U.S. Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition,
Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research
December 13, 2022**

Chairman Booker, Ranking Member Braun, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today and for your interest in using nutrition in preventive and curative care to reduce the causes of death, disease, and disability. My name is Dr. Bob Chestnut, and I am Cummins' Chief Medical Officer and the Executive Director of Global Clinical Operations.

Cummins' health and wellness programs are a part of Cummins' demand that everything we do leads to a cleaner, healthier and safer environment. We have long believed we must focus on the whole person to achieve improved health and wellness outcomes. This focus on the whole person includes programs to improve nutrition, increase health literacy, improve access to healthful foods, and reduce the prevalence and morbidity of diet-related chronic diseases. My following testimony will detail the work and reason behind Cummins' preventive health measures and how Congress can help companies like Cummins expand these benefits for their workers, families, and communities.

Cummins Inc.

Cummins Inc. is a 100-year-old company founded and headquartered in Columbus, Indiana. We are a global power leader that brings the right technology solutions to market at the right time. These solutions include advanced diesel, natural gas, hybrid, electric and fuel cell, and other technologies. We're powering the future through innovations that improve people's lives and reduce our environmental footprint. Cummins employs more than 70,000 employees globally and operates in over 190 countries throughout the world. In the United States, we have manufacturing facilities in Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Connecticut, and California. Beyond our manufacturing operations in the United States, we also own our distributor network with locations in almost every state.

Cummins products are in a wide range of applications, including small passenger trucks, tractor-trailers that move goods across the country, pick-up and delivery trucks, as well as transit and school buses. You will also find our products in refuse trucks, mining equipment, oil-and-gas operations, passenger trains, and tugboats. Our products also generate electricity in applications from portable power systems that support our military to critical backup power systems that keep data centers and hospitals up and running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. National Landmarks that many Americans see every day, like Wrigley Field and the Statue of Liberty, also rely on Cummins for their backup power needs.

Current Food as Medicine Interventions

Cummins is mindful that success is only achievable through the work of a talented, determined, and healthy workforce. We demonstrate our commitment to our employees through our health, welfare, well-being programs, and onsite clinical services. We also acknowledge that a person's workplace may positively or negatively impact their health and well-being and strive for Cummins' work environments to be health-promoting.

Cummins is particularly proud of our LiveWell Center located at the very heart of our working population in Columbus, Indiana. More than 10,000 employees and their dependents live within range of this comprehensive Patient-Centered Medical Home. In addition to the typical advance primary care services, we offer many programs and resources specific to nutrition. These include a Teaching Kitchen, medical providers formally trained in Lifestyle Medicine, chronic care management, and wellness coaching.

Our Teaching Kitchen is supported by a professional chef who meets with individuals or groups to provide hands-on experience with healthful food selection, food preparation, and health literacy. We have found that people will often successfully expand or shift their palate after becoming more familiar with healthy foods and having positive experiences through this kitchen. While the Teaching Kitchen is located in Columbus, Indiana, employees and dependents across the United States can connect virtually and benefit from its offerings.

In addition to primary care and occupational health, our medical providers are formally trained and board-certified in Lifestyle Medicine. With this expertise, they can integrate nutrition, physical activity, and other behavior modification therapies in their treatment plans to reduce and frequently reverse disease.

We offer chronic care management for employees and dependents with diabetes or pre-diabetes. A team-based model is used to support these individuals with the physician, ambulatory pharmacist, registered dietitians, Teaching Kitchen chef, and other team members creating multiple layers of support.

Wellness Coaching is available for all employees and dependents throughout the United States. Participants can join in person or virtually at no cost. At our larger sites, we offer our Lifestyle 365 program. This is a ten-session, intensive program focused on healthful foods, physical activity, and building health-promoting behaviors led by our wellness coaches. Participants receive a prepared lunch of healthy food to try in each session. We have found that this hands-on part of the program benefits individuals to be fully engaged and try previously unfamiliar food. Pre- and post-biometric measures support that this program improves overall health and increases positivity toward health-promoting behaviors.

We can offer healthful cafeteria and vending items at many of our larger sites. Our cafeterias help improve food access and are places where employees can gain exposure and positive experiences with healthier options. We have found interventions as simple as reorganizing cafeteria and vending machine offerings so that healthier options are at eye level or seen first to improve choices.

Benefits of a Business Approach

Cummins believes the business community should engage in public health policy discussions because we believe investing in the diverse but interconnected communities we serve improves

our communities. Employees and their families that benefit from accessible health services become community health ambassadors and can positively influence others at their schools, places of worship, and worksites.

It also makes good business sense. The combined healthcare spending and lost productivity from suboptimal eating cost the economy \$1.1 trillion yearly.¹ Diet-related health conditions are more likely to lead to absenteeism and less productivity at work. Related emotional and mood disorders can also make employees tired and less satisfied with their work. We know that happier and fulfilled employees are more likely to stay at their company and even recruit other talented individuals to come work there.

Cummins believes we have the ability and reach to support our employees and their families in living productive, active lives. Over 145 million Americans are workers, and most spend at least 50% of their time at the workplace.² This means businesses have the access and attention of those that the medical and policy worlds seek to help. Internally and externally, companies have numerous channels and spheres of influence they can use to encourage healthier lifestyles. For example, employee newsletters, social media channels, onsite signage, paid advertising, town hall meetings, and modeling responsible behaviors can all support employee and community health. Businesses may also improve food access and create health-promoting work environments by offering healthful, affordable food in their cafeterias and break rooms.

Congressional Support

Congress can take meaningful steps in helping the business community support public health initiatives such as reducing food-based health conditions.

First, continue to include the business community in health discussions exploring how employers may create health-promoting work environments for their employees. As stated before, employers can play a meaningful role in increasing the accessibility of nutrition-based chronic disease reducing resources. Federal support like tax incentives on corporate food as medicine investments would increase the ability of businesses to offer health products and services. Support for companies providing flexible health solutions would be particularly impactful for companies looking to offer telehealth and medical services across state lines. Employers could increase the value of our health resources and reduce inequities by allowing our employees and dependents greater access to these tools.

Congress can also support programs such as Total Worker Health by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as they include nutrition as a critical component of their programs for employers to adopt a holistic health approach. The Total Worker Health program recognizes that many health problems previously considered unrelated to work, including cardiovascular disease, obesity, depression, and sleep disorders, can also lead to unsafe worksites. Increased

¹ The Rockefeller Foundation. (July 2021). *True Cost of Food: Measuring What Matters to Transform the U.S. Food System*. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/True-Cost-of-Food-Full-Report-Final.pdf>

² National Institutes of Health – Office of Disease Prevention. “Total Worker Health—What’s Work Got to Do With It?” <https://prevention.nih.gov/research-priorities/research-needs-and-gaps/pathways-prevention/total-worker-healthr-whats-work-got-to-do-it>. Accessed December 7, 2022.

resources for the Total Worker Health program could help businesses develop tailored, comprehensive health solutions, including increasing daily access to healthier food and lifestyles.

Conclusion

Thank you, again, for the great honor and privilege of speaking to you all today. If I can provide any information to you on behalf of Cummins Inc. I would be honored to discuss this or any other issue with you or your staff.