

# Urban food initiative ethical for addressing food issues

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Photo: Agricultural Research Service

(HealthDay)—The urban food initiative (UFI) seems to be a safe and ethical approach to addressing obesity and food insecurity, according to a viewpoint piece published online Aug. 18 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Deepak Palakshappa, M.D., from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and colleagues discuss the concept of the UFI, developed by Doug Rauch, the former president of Trader Joe's grocery chain. The UFI would address obesity, [food insecurity](#), and [food](#) waste by opening nonprofit supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods. Noting that these supermarkets would sell low-cost produce and healthy prepared foods, offer cooking classes, and sell food that is near or past the sell-by date, they addressed the safety and [ethical concerns](#).

The authors note that manufacturers and food retailers focus on a product's shelf life in dating their products, and consequently the confusion regarding date labeling is estimated to lead to 32 billion pounds of avoidable [food waste](#) per year. To assess the ethical aspects of the UFI, the researchers followed a sequence of considerations. These included negative psychosocial consequences of the program, which are being addressed in focus groups; support of equality via the program in terms of provision of [healthy food](#) for those who may not have access to these foods; and protection of privacy via allowing people to purchase healthier food and cook meals at home.

"The store's food will not be harmful, and the initiative is an ethically appropriate strategy to prevent obesity and food insecurity," the authors write.

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

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