

### **Nutritional Assistance, Health Status, and the role of Supply chain Actors in Tennessee.**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp program, is designed to provide food assistance by providing monthly benefit Payments to households that meet federal eligibility criteria (Yen et al., 2012). Eligible households and individuals can access a diverse array of essential food items with certain restrictions on non-food items, hot food at the point of sale, and alcoholic beverages (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2024). Despite extensive research on its impacts, little is known about how store authorizations and closures impact the program's effectiveness on enrollment and participants' health. This study investigates the causal impact of SNAP-authorized store dynamics on health outcomes and household enrollment.

Using USDA's SNAP Retailer Locator Dataset (2012-2022), we examine how variations in SNAP-authorized retail outlets affect program access, enrollment patterns, and health indicators in Tennessee. Preliminary findings show that 54% of SNAP stores in Tennessee ceased participation between 2012 and 2022, while 46% remained active. Store zip codes will be mapped to census tracts using HUD USPS Zip Code Crosswalk Files for enhanced geographic precision. Health outcomes data will be sourced from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), focusing on health-related quality of life (HRQOL) measures, including self-rated health, physical and mental distress, activity limitations, and overall unhealthy days.

To empirically assess the causal effect of SNAP store availability on program enrollment, we employ the Difference-in-Difference method (De Chaisemartin & d'Haultfoeuille, 2024) which estimates the Average Treatment Effect as stores participate in SNAP in a staggered fashion for more precise analysis.

This study's findings contribute to the growing literature on SNAP by highlighting the critical role of retail infrastructure in shaping program outcomes. This comprehensive approach is intended to provide policymakers with a subtle understanding of SNAP's broader impacts, enabling them to make informed evidence-based decisions that enhance public health and nutrition outcomes.

### **REFERENCES**

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