Food access and food insecurity are prevalent in North Carolina and more specifically Asheville. Almost 2 million residents of North Carolina have limited food access, and of that number almost a quarter are children. Along with food insecurity, more than one in three children in North Carolina are overweight or obese. Though the issues of food insecurity and obesity appear unrelated, they often fall hand in hand.

In Asheville, there are many options for people who have adequate transportation to access healthy foods; however, many are left with no way to access a grocery store, meaning they have no choice but to turn to fast food or corner stores.

The issue of lack of healthy food access will not go away unless changes are made in the way that people are able to access healthy foods. One solution to this issue is increasing the amount of healthy foods in corner stores.

Though to some this may not seem like a solution, many people who live in places where it is difficult to access a grocery store make many food purchases at their local corner store. At this time, most corner stores lack healthy options, which severely limits the intake of healthy foods.

An initiative has recently taken off that supports placing healthy foods in corner stores. A poll has found that over 70 percent of North Carolina voters support the creation of a Healthy Corner Store Initiative, which would place healthier options in corner stores as a way for more people to access these healthy options. The increased amount of healthy options could lower the number of food-insecure people and ultimately decrease the obesity rates in North Carolina.

If you believe that the Healthy Corner Store Initiative would better the state and city of Asheville, call your representatives to show your support.

— Carmen Procida
Local high school student
Asheville