



AgeOptions Nutrition Innovations Closed Loop Referral System

Overview of Grant

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Nutrition Innovations Grant

- Administration on Community Living (ACL) awarded five grantees for innovative projects that will enhance the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of nutrition service programs provided by the national aging services network
- ACL aims to identify innovative and promising practices that can be scaled across the country and to increase use of evidence-informed practices within nutrition programs
- AgeOptions is one of the five grantees in 2018 awarded a two-year grant with specific goals and objectives



Goals of the Grant

1. Implement a closed-loop referral system between healthcare providers and nutrition programs
2. Decrease the prevalence of food insecurity
3. Increase the likelihood that patients (older adults) experiencing food insecurity and/or are at nutrition risk will receive and act upon referrals to community-based resources



Additional Goals

- While not specifically articulated in the grant
 - Health care is witnessing nutrition as significant in the health of their patients; AgeOptions is hoping healthcare providers see the aging network as the resource for nutrition
 - The strategies employed in the grant and the research is anticipated to test a system
 - Lessons learned will be shared and hopefully impact future public policy



Background: What is Food Insecurity?

One of the many Social Determinants of Health

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines it as:
 - “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”
 - “A situation in which households lack access to enough nutritious food for a healthy, active life.”

Food Insecurity and Health: A Tool Kit for Physicians and Health Care Organizations, retrieved from <http://populationhealth.humana.com/documents/Food-Insecurity-Toolkit.pdf>; on November 5, 2018.



Food Insecurity

- According to Lee and Frongillo, in their study *Nutrition and Health Consequences Are Associated with Food Insecurity among U.S. Elderly Persons* define food insecurity as:
 - “Older people who consume less than the recommended dietary allowance for eight nutrients of saturated fat, niacin, riboflavin, Vitamins B-6 and B-12, magnesium, iron and zinc.”



Food Insecurity as a Social Determinant of Health (SDoH)

The World Health Organization defines social determinants of health as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. They are the factors mostly responsible for health inequities . . . Approximately 80 percent of physicians maintain that addressing patients' social needs is as critical as addressing their medical needs. There are five major determinant areas:

- **Economic stability** (poverty, employment, **food security**, housing stability);
- **Education** (high school graduation, enrollment in higher education, language and literacy);
- **Social and community context** (social cohesion, discrimination, incarceration);
- **Health and health care** (accessibility and health literacy); and
- **Neighborhood and built environment** (food deserts, quality of housing, safety)

These factors can impact population health outcomes by establishing a negative social and physical environment and deepening the inequities that certain populations face.

Retrieved on November 20, 2018 from: <http://www.allhealthpolicy.org/sourcebook/social-determinants-of-health/>



AgeOptions Strategic Initiatives

- Social isolation and food insecurity is a strategic initiative for AgeOptions over the next three years
- The grant and its goals and objectives will help us address these strategic initiatives



Objectives for Operationalizing the Goals

1. To implement a closed-loop referral system between healthcare providers and nutrition providers
2. To increase referrals from healthcare providers to nutrition programs
3. To increase patient (older adult) access to and utilization of nutrition programs such as SNAP, Medicaid and evidence-based wellness programs such as Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME), A Matter of Balance



Anticipated Outcomes

1. Older adults will have increased access to nutritious food that meets medically-necessary health requirements
2. Continuity of care between community and clinical settings will be established and enhanced
3. Healthcare providers will prove a reduction in healthcare expenses for referred patients
4. Analysis will reveal the long-term financial viability of maintaining and expanding the referral system
5. A sustainability plan will be developed to support the initiative in the future



Grant Environmental Context (Providers/Grant Participants)

- Project Coordination, Research (in-collaboration with Rush University Health Systems), Evaluation and linkage to programs and services - **AgeOptions**
- Health Care Providers
 - **Rush University Oak Park Hospital**
 - **Oak Street Health**
- Technology for Closed Loop System - **NowPow**
- Meal Resources
 - Array of home delivered meal providers, congregate sites including Mom's Meals, referrals to food pantries, emergency food (hospital discharge)
- Education – **Mather LifeWays'** Telephone Topics



Evidence

As of 02/20/2019, Strategies are in Development

1. Implement a closed-loop referral system between healthcare providers and nutrition programs
 - Contracts in-place for Rush, Oak Street Health, the array of AgeOptions contracted nutrition providers including Mom's Meals (especially for special diets)
 - Utilization reports from NowPow
 - Ensuring the bi-directional flow of referrals – evidence that the older adult followed-up with the resources



Evidence (2)

As of 02/20/2019, Strategies are in Development

2. To increase referrals from healthcare providers to nutrition programs
 - Educate on eligibility for home delivered meals, congregate meals and the array of places to obtain nutrition
 - Educate on food insecurity and its impact on the health of older adults
 - Includes a telephone-based nutrition education and health promotion through Mather LifeWays' Telephone Topics
 - NowPow usage reports showing an uptick in referrals to nutrition programs
 - Number of linkages using the closed loop referral system demonstrating that persons not only have been referred, but are accessing meals and other food resources



Evidence (3)

As of As of 02/20/2019, Strategies are in Development

3. To increase patient (older adult) access to and utilization of nutrition programs such as SNAP, Medicaid and evidence-based wellness programs such as Chronic Disease Self Management Education (CDSME), A Matter of Balance
 - NowPow and/or AgeOptions usage reports showing an uptick in referrals to nutrition programs and completion of applications for SNAP and other benefits
 - Participation in wellness programs and resources, including Mather Lifeways' Telephone Topics



Additional Outcomes

1. Older adults will have increased access to nutritious food that meets medically-necessary health requirements
 - Assist the healthcare providers expand their identification of patients relating to food insecurity
2. Continuity of care between community and clinical settings will be established and enhanced
3. Healthcare providers will prove a reduction in healthcare expenses for referred patients
4. Analysis will reveal the long-term financial viability of maintaining and expanding the referral system
5. A sustainability plan will be developed to support the initiative in the future



Evaluation and Research

- In collaboration with Rush University Health Systems, AgeOptions is in-process of submitting an IRB
- Research will be measuring and evaluating:
 - The impact of food interventions on participants' perception of health and wellness
 - The value to the referring healthcare entities of the closed-loop system and knowing the outcome of food interventions
 - Potential healthcare cost-savings

