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Track: Our Care **Secondary Track:** Our Vision

Title: Food is Medicine and Prevention: The Importance of Good Nutrition in Treatment and Policy

Objectives: This session will review groundbreaking research demonstrating how food and nutrition services (FNS) helps improve health outcomes, lower costs and improve patient satisfaction for PLWHA. We will then establish how FNS are vital to addressing the goals of the following key visions in policy and treatment: Ending AIDS by 2020, The Triple Aim, The National HIV/AIDS Strategy, The Treatment Cascade, and the AIDS Free Generation. We will conclude with a discussion of the nutrition at the crossroads of the Ryan White Treatment and Modernization Act and the Affordable Care Act and opportunities for continued support of this vital service for PLWHA.

Methods: Research conducted in NYC and across the country demonstrates why good nutrition is crucial for the management of HIV infection, as it is needed to increase absorption of medication, reduce side effects, and maintain healthy body weight. Food insecurity is also a source of chronic stress that has consequences to immunological functioning, as well as for mental health and reduced adherence to medical treatments. In addition, providing FNS can serve to facilitate access and engagement with medical care especially among vulnerable populations. The session will review this critical research and what it means for PLWHA, especially the importance of nutrition to women, some of whom may be mothers with the need to nourish their families. Further the session will demonstrate that without the inclusion of FNS as a covered service in the both the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the Ryan White Treatment and Modernization Act (RW), accomplishing the goals of various key visions in policy and treatment will be impossible, specifically: Ending AIDS by 2020, The Triple Aim, The National HIV/AIDS Strategy, The Treatment Cascade, and the AIDS Free Generation. The session will end with a brief discussion of the innovative ways FNS has been incorporated into the medical care continuum, as well as challenges to ensuring proper coverage of FNS for PLWHA in the coming years.

Results: God's Love We Deliver is the leading provider of medically tailored home-delivered meals to PLWHA in New York City. As the policy leader of both our local and national provider coalitions, a key member of various national HIV advocacy organizations (like FAPP and AIDS United), we are uniquely positioned to deliver the current perspective on these vital policy issues. Attendees will profit from our advocacy expertise, our historical perspective and our leadership in the field of nutrition.

Conclusions: Challenges and changes to our clients' access to FNS will multiply as health care reform is rolled out in New York and beyond and as major changes are made to Medicaid, Medicare, insurance and, potentially, Ryan White funding. Advocacy to preserve services is absolutely critical to ensure continued access to nutrition and food for PLWHA. This session will give a comprehensive overview of the importance of FNS for PLWHA and the vision for the future support of this category of services.