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

The mission of God’s Love We Deliver is to improve the health and well-being of men, women and children living with serious illnesses by alleviating hunger and malnutrition.

We are dedicated to cooking and delivering the specific, nutritious meals a member’s severe illness and treatment so urgently require.
Core Principles

For 30 years, we have never wavered from our three core principles.

Being sick and hungry is a crisis that demands an urgent response:

• We deliver each client’s first meal on the next delivery day
• We never have a waiting list
• We never charge clients for their meals
Mission in Action

• 16 million meals since our founding in 1985
• Deliveries in all 5 boroughs of New York City, Westchester and Nassau counties and in Hudson County, NJ
• 5,000 meals prepared and delivered each week day
• 1.3 million individually tailored meals delivered this fiscal year
Our Clients Today

• In the last year:
  • Over 5,000 unique clients, dependents and caregivers
  • 25% HIV+
  • 53% female, 5.6% children
  • 35% black/AA, 38.5% white, 22.1% Hispanic, 4.4% other/unknown
  • 90% live at or below FPL
God’s Love We Deliver is Unique

God’s Love is the only organization that:

• Focuses on people with serious illnesses
• Cooks and home delivers meals that are individually-tailored and nutritious
• Offers flexible service plans and delivery schedules
• Freshly prepares all meals on site:
  • No preservatives
  • No starters
  • No fillers
Food is Medicine for PLWHA

While adequate food and nutrition is important for all people, proper nutrition is critical for the management of HIV/AIDS.
Why is Nutrition Important?

• Helps the immune system fight infections
• Builds and maintains muscle
• Helps achieve or maintain healthy weight
• Reduces risk of chronic disease
• Helps medications work better
• Increases energy levels
What is Healthy Eating?

A well-balanced diet provides:

• Protection food – fruits & vegetables
• Energy food – grains & starches
• Growth food – protein
• Extra energy – fats, oils and sweets
• Water – 8 cups a day (at least)
My Plate Planner
A Healthy Meal Tastes Great

The Plate Method is a simple way to plan meals for you and your family. You don’t have to count anything or read long lists of foods. All you need is a 9-inch plate.
Nutrition Focus on Women

HIV & Bone health

Bone loss normally occurs after age 35 and speeds up after menopause. HIV increases risk for bone loss.

- Get enough calcium & vit D – through food and supplements (needs increase with age)
- Stop smoking
- Do moderate weight bearing exercise
- Speak to your medical provider about bone health
Nutrition Focus on Women

Heart Disease

- Myth – affects only men
- Heart Disease is the #1 leading cause of death in women (and men) in the US
- Largely preventable through diet & lifestyle changes
Nutrition Focus on Women

HIV & Heart Disease

For those living with HIV:
• 70-80% increased risk of a heart attack
• 60-70% smoke compared to 20% of general population
• Higher rates of:
  – High cholesterol
  – High blood pressure
  – Diabetes
How to Lower Risk

• Achieve a healthy blood cholesterol level through a healthy eating pattern
• Achieve a healthy body weight
• Attain a desirable blood pressure
• Quit smoking!
Dietary Fats

These FATS contribute to high blood cholesterol:

• Saturated fats
  – Increases cholesterol levels
  – Aim for 13 grams or less

• Trans fats
  – Increases LDL (bad) cholesterol & decreases HDL (good) cholesterol
  – Aim for *none*
Dietary Fats – Healthful Choices

Mono & Polyunsaturated fats

– Help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol

Food sources:

– Olive oil, canola oil, safflower oil, avocados, peanut butter, nuts & seeds

– Soybean oil, corn oil, sunflower oil, salmon, mackerel, herring & trout
What is blood pressure?

• Blood exerts pressure on the arteries as it pumps through – this is blood pressure

• Blood pressure is measured as two numbers:
  – systolic pressure (when the heart beats)
  – diastolic pressure (when the heart relaxes between beats)

• When this pressure is high you have high blood pressure or hypertension

• Hypertension = a reading of 140/90 mm Hg or greater
Hypertension

• No symptoms
• Increases workload of heart & contributes to:
  Narrowing arteries
  Heart attacks
  Stroke
  Congestive heart failure
  Kidney disease
  Blindness
How to Lower Your Risk

Medications

Lifestyle changes – huge impact can be made here!

• Diet
• Weight loss
• Exercise
• Smoking cessation
• Stress reduction
• Monitoring
Heart Healthy Eating Patterns

Do eat:

– Fruits & vegetables
– Whole grains
– Low fat or non-dairy products
– Lean meats, fish, nuts & beans
– Alcohol in moderation (if at all)
  • 1 drink/day for women
  • 2 drinks/day for men
Should I Exercise? YES!

Benefits of exercise:
- Improves immune function
- Decreases body fat, increases muscle
- Lowers blood pressure
- Decreases stress
- Lowers bad cholesterol, increases good cholesterol
- Improves glucose (sugar) levels
- Makes bones stronger

Do whatever activity you like & is safe for you!

*Always speak to your medical provider before starting any type of exercise*
What counts as exercise?

• Walking
  – Get off subway/bus 1-2 stops before yours and walk
• Gardening
• Household chores
• Taking the stairs
• Playing with children
• Chair exercises
Food and Nutrition Services in Policy
Ryan White FNS
Care Continuum

Addresses HIV/AIDS from prevention through management and treatment.

Intensity of symptoms and illness ➔
Access to FNS achieves the **Triple Aim** of the ACA

- **Better Health Outcomes**
- **Improved Patient Satisfaction**
- **Lower Cost Of Care**
Better Health Outcomes with FNS

PLWHA who are food insecure have:

- **Poor health outcomes** (statistically significant)
  - Lower CD4 counts
  - Less likely to have undetectable viral loads
  - Increased morbidity and mortality
  - Poorer mental health functioning

- **Poor medical care outcomes** (statistically significant)
  - More missed primary care appointments
  - More emergency room visits
  - Less use of ART

**Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is associated with**

- improved outcomes related to energy intake and/or decreased symptoms
- improved outcomes related to weight gain, CD4 count, and quality of life
Lower Cost of Care with FNS

Research shows that adding medically tailored food to a care plan dramatically reduces healthcare costs for PLWHA from $50,000/month to $17,000/month.

Nourished clients have:
• Fewer emergency room visits
• Fewer missed primary care appointments
• If hospitalized:
  • costs were 30% lower*
  • length of stay reduced by 37%*

Malnourished clients have:
• More emergency room visits
• Hospital stays that are 3x longer
• Inpatient costs that are 3x higher
• A likelihood of rehospitalization that is 2x as high
Clients overwhelmingly report that our services help them:

• Live more independently
• Eat more nutritiously
• Manage their medical treatment and medications more effectively

Improved Patient Satisfaction
Nutrition is an Inexpensive Intervention

Feed someone for 1/2 a year for the same cost as 1 day in the hospital

#foodismmedicine
FNS – Impact on the Treatment Cascade

OVERALL: Of the 1.1 million Americans living with HIV, only 25 percent are virally suppressed.
Goal 1: Reducing new HIV infections

Goal 2: Increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for PLWHA

Goal 3: Reducing HIV-related disparities and health inequities
Other Policy Initiatives

AIDS-FREE
GENERATION
STARTS WITH ME

2020

AIDS-FREE NY

AIDS-FREE
FNS at the Crossroads of Healthcare Reform
Why is Ryan White Still Important?

• Ryan White is the **gold standard** for managing the care of high-need, high-risk individuals with an infectious disease.

• **Need for support services** for PLWHA will continue to be paramount
  – Medicaid does not provide support services
  – Medicaid does not cover immigrants (except in certain states)

• **Need for medical services** in states that are not expanding Medicaid
Achieving a more coordinated national response to the HIV epidemic

To do this, FNS must be included in all healthcare reform efforts, including Ryan White and the ACA

1. **Ryan White** remains crucial for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, even with some integration of FNS in the ACA through Medicaid

2. **The ACA** - There is a tremendous variation in coverage of FNS outside of Ryan White by state
   - Even with some progress on home delivered meals within the ACA and state Medicaid Expansion, key services like pantry bags and congregate programs will be a longer fight
Contacts

Lisa Zullig
Director of Nutrition Services
lzullig@glwd.org
212-294-8157

Alissa Wassung
Director of Policy & Planning
awassung@glwd.org
212.294.8171
REFERENCES


