

2009-2014 Senior Nutrition Priorities and Directions

Priority 1 - Maximize Resources

Strategy 1. Target the most vulnerable.

Tactics

- Ensure that Older Americans Act targeting criteria are met.
- Balance the need for socialization with health and nutrition needs when possible
- Target older adults who are identified to be at high nutrition risk. Give priority to providing nutrition services to individuals who are at high nutrition risk in both the congregate and home-delivered meals programs.
- Develop criteria for services – phase in migration to serving higher risk/need. In part, use CMS income data by zip code to target services.
- Develop statewide policy on opening and closing sites, and on allowable reductions in service.
- Investigate, and if warranted, pilot private pay approach as a way to assure sustainability and maximize resources.
- Investigate ways to maximize contribution levels including offering enhanced meal options.
- Identify unmet need by tracking waiting lists, intake requests and Senior LinkAge Line® calls and other potential methods that were identified.

Strategy 2. Achieve a collective understanding of available resources and identify ways to leverage these resources.

Tactics

- Establish the Contracts Workgroup represented by providers, AAA, and MBA staff to update and streamline the contracting process. Evaluate and adjust the new contracting process on an annual basis, with input from providers and AAAs.
- Implement a new RFP/Contract Template that will include statewide standardized cost definitions, reviewed standards aligned with minimum OAA requirements, and additional methods to minimize provider risk, and mid-course contract renegotiations.

- Ensure adequate communication about available resources between Area Agencies on Aging and providers.
- Make appropriate use of Elderly Waiver, Alternative Care and Title III to provide nutrition services to older Minnesotans.
- Leverage other nutrition programs, including the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS), Senior Farmers Market, and Food Support/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) to help maximize resources.

Strategy 3. Expand the use of technology and identify other ways to streamline data collection that will more fully use data to drive program changes.

Tactics

- Establish the Data Workgroup to:
 - 1) identify and facilitate implementation of technology that might include bar code cards, scannable forms and finger print tracking
 - 2) research financial sources and partners to implement new technology
 - 3) establish benchmarks to reach 100% NAPIS registration form completion
 - 4) identify statewide data components that will be utilized to inform nutrition program planning.
- Explore options to facilitate completion of NAPIS registration forms, with particular emphasis on the nutrition risk assessment.

Strategy 4. Enhance nutrition education to empower consumers to make healthful choices

Tactics

- Partner with other organizations/networks that are focused on the health of older adults, including University of MN Food and Nutrition Network and University of Minnesota Extension.
- In collaboration with the MN Department of Health, disseminate evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention models statewide, including Eat Better Move More and Healthy Eating for Successful Living.

Priority 2 - Build Relationships in the Aging Network

Strategy 1. Rebuild trust at all levels.

Tactics

- MBA will meet in-person at least annually with providers and AAAs to collectively address challenges in service delivery. Opportunity for discussion on these topics will be included to gather input from all groups
- MBA will establish and coordinate regularly scheduled communication between providers, AAAs and MBA. This will include implementing the feedback loop on requests and requirements.
- Encourage AAAs to have representatives from other AAAs participate in their proposal review process.

Strategy 2. Improve communication channels across Minnesota's aging network.

Tactics

- Establish an area on the MBA extranet for Area Agency on Aging and nutrition provider staff to share program forms, information, new ideas, and challenges related to providing nutrition services to older Minnesotans.
- Build and expand referral networks for providers including long term care and home health providers. Assure that nutrition services are included with these groups and linked to other services as appropriate.
- Develop and use a consistent message about the value of the Senior Nutrition Program that can be communicated to funding sources including state and local government.

Priority 3 - Improve Sustainability

Strategy 1. Explore innovative methods of cost containment.

Tactics

- Incorporate the nutrition program into federal long-term care reform efforts, such as Project 2020.
- Determine costs and benefits of existing and new service delivery models, including bundled service delivery, frozen meals, group purchasing and/or a single caterer for multiple programs.
- Disseminate models identified as cost-effective statewide, as appropriate.

Strategy 2. Enhance methods to assure quality of service.

Tactics

- Define and measure quality standards based on metrics that include consumer preference, costs, current research and cultural needs.

Strategy 3. Develop new models to recruit and retain volunteers.

Tactics

- Facilitate program exchanges between Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging and providers on ways to engage volunteers. Continue to learn from other states on ways to recruit and retain volunteers.
- Develop a process to assess the costs and benefits to using volunteers versus paid staff.