Senior Nutrition Program

Webinar Takeaways

**Health and Well-Being**

March 25, 2021

[Webinar recording and PowerPoint](https://acl.gov/SeniorNutrition)

This webinar was the fourth of four events held in March to celebrate the anniversary of the National Senior Nutrition Program, which began in 1972.

# Learning Objectives

* Define health and well-being, including new challenges presented during the pandemic.
* Health and well-being programs and the value of partnerships.
* Reaching and marketing to older Americans.

The webinar kicked off with a welcome from ACL’s Nutrition Consultant for the Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Program, followed by two program speakers who addressed how they are tackling senior nutrition in their states.

# Speaker #1

Carmen Clutter, MS, RDN, LD, Population Health and Nutrition Manager, Ohio Department on Aging

* Assessed older Ohioans and created a comprehensive report about their health and well-being.
* Key findings of the assessment:
  + The opportunity to live a long and full life is out of reach for many Ohioans.
  + Strengthening housing and transportation in Ohio supports health aging.
  + Most people can cover basic needs, but many are not financially ready for life after work.
  + Caregiver supports and workforce capacity are key issues facing this population.
  + Older Ohioans face mounting challenges related to mental health and addiction.
  + Chronic conditions, including heart disease as well as dementia and related disorders, remain a concern for older Ohioans.
* Striking statistic: The assessment revealed a difference in life expectancy among residents in two areas located a mere four miles apart: nearly 22 years.
* Nutrition strategies instituted during COVID-19:
  + Prioritized essential services:
    - Personal care
    - Adult day services
    - Assisted transportation
    - Home-delivered meals
    - Care coordination
  + Created Small-Business Restaurant Initiative to support restaurants and meet the increased demand for home-delivered meals.
  + Used Title III-B funds to expand grocery ordering & delivery services.
  + Instituted bulk purchasing with farmers, using drive-thru pickup and home-delivered produce deliveries to get food to the community.
* Assessment data-informed development of the [Strategic Action Plan on Aging](https://aging.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/aging/about-us/reports-and-data/2020-2022-strategic-action-plan-on-aging-sapa) (SAPA).
  + Aims to advance elder justice and equity and to achieve optimal health and well-being for older Ohioans.
  + Vision is Ohio is the best place to age in the nation.
  + Developed nutrition strategies and measurements to improve health behaviors for older Ohioans.

# Speaker #2

Alexandra Bauman, RD, LDN, Nutrition, Health & Wellness Director, Iowa Department on Aging

* Consumer participation in Iowa’s congregate meal program decreased 60% from 2010 to 2019.
* The program has identified barriers, worked to build new knowledge in the barrier areas, and is currently addressing both barriers and system issues. Barriers found include:
  + Marketing
  + Intake form
  + Menu
  + Nutrition
  + Funding
  + Environment
* Purpose of the Older Americans Act (OAA)
  + Reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition.
  + Promote socialization of older adults.
  + Promote health and well-being with access to nutrition and health promotion/disease prevention service to delay the onset of chronic conditions.
* According to the 2018 National Survey of OAA Participants:
  + 80% of congregate participants say they eat healthier because of the meal program.
  + 90%of home-delivered participants report the program helped them live independently and remain in their home.
* The OAA Nutrition Program is not simply a “feeding program” or a “meal program.”
* Stressed the value of partnerships, outlining Iowa AAA community partners:
  + Mayor and local government
  + Nonprofits
  + Public spaces (e.g., parks, libraries, schools)
  + Faith-based organizations
  + Healthcare and hospital networks
  + Grocery stores
  + Food banks and pantries
* Outreach and marketing have been a focus.
  + Implemented a café-style concept (the Iowa Café) to make congregate meals more appealing to participants.
  + More information available on the Department of Aging’s [webpage](https://iowaaging.gov/health).