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HAPPY OLDER AMERICANS MONTH!

In celebration of Older Americans Month 2018, Defeat Malnutrition Today is pleased to launch the new “Defeat Malnutrition Today News” newsletter, which will be a regular publication of the coalition. We plan to highlight nutrition news as well as news items from members of the coalition. If you have any news to submit on behalf of your organization (or others), please email Meredith Whitmire at mponder@matzblancato.com. Also, if you would like a DMT representative to speak at one of your events or conferences, please also email Meredith.

May 2018's Older Americans Month theme is “Engage at Every Age.” The theme is meant to emphasize that you are never too old (or young) to take part in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and the theme celebrates the many ways in which older adults make a difference in our communities. You can find more information about #OAM18 here on the Administration for Community Living (ACL) website.

We believe that this theme is highly relevant to older adult malnutrition; older adults (and their caregivers) can take charge of their nutritional health and make a difference in their own care.

NEW COALITION MEMBERS

DMT would like to welcome the PA Foundation and North Dakota Senior Service Providers to the coalition. We are pleased to have you join our coalition of more than 75 members (and growing!) and we all look forward to working with you!

DMT NATIONAL COORDINATOR TESTIFIES AT HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS HEARING

On April 26, DMT National Coordinator Bob Blancato testified before the US House Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee. In his comments, he drew the link between malnutrition and elder abuse, as well as thanking the subcommittee for increases to Older Americans Act nutrition programs in the FY 2018 omnibus bill. Click here to read his testimony.
COALITION RECEIVES LETTER FROM CMS

DMT has received a response to its letter to Seema Verma, the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). We asked about her comments on malnutrition during her confirmation hearing as well as CMS’s implementation of the four malnutrition electronic clinical quality measures. Dr. Kate Goodrich, MD, Director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality and CMS Chief Medical Officer, responded on behalf of CMS that they “agree that understanding determinants for health such as malnutrition among beneficiaries is an important issue to support,” and that they are “reviewing [the measures] based upon the new Meaningful Measures Initiative.” You can read her response here.

DMT COMMENTS ON FY 2019 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

DMT submitted comments to the House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee regarding funding for FY 2019 programs under their subcommittee, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, and the Agriculture Research Service, including human nutrition research. The Subcommittee will be marking up its FY 2019 bill on Wednesday, May 9 at 4 PM ET. The markup hearing will be aired live at this link.

DMT COMMENTS ON HEALTH INFORMATION TRANSFER MEASURES

On Thursday, May 3, the coalition submitted comments to CMS on quality measures regarding transfer of health information when patients transition care settings. The coalition is pleased to see that these measures would include nutritional supplements, vitamins and total parenteral nutrition (TPN) in the electronic health records and medication profile given to providers, patients and patients’ caregivers, and advocates that these records should also contain a nutrition care plan when called for by a professional on the patient’s care team. Read our full comments here on our website.

UPDATE ON THE FARM BILL REAUTHORIZED

On April 18, the House Agriculture Committee passed its Farm Bill reauthorization, known as the “Agriculture and Nutrition Act,” out of the full committee on a sharply-divided partisan vote. It now goes to the full House for consideration.

The House reauthorization currently calls for new work requirements on older SNAP recipients ages 50-59, sharply limits benefit time periods for those recipients who are not working, and takes away state flexibility on categorical eligibility enrollment definitions and standard utility allowance enrollment. The bill extends the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program at current authorized funding levels through 2023.

Thirty-five national organizations, including eleven members of the DMT coalition, co-signed a letter to the Committee prior to the hearing to express their concerns with the House bill.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has not yet released a Farm Bill reauthorization draft bill; their draft is expected to contain more bipartisan policies.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON NUTRITION AND AGING DEBUTS NEW LOOK

Last month, the National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging’s website got a complete re-launch, with new organization to more easily serve nutrition and aging professionals. The site has a new quick-start guide here, and you can register for a webinar being held on Wednesday, May 9 at 3:30 ET to learn all about the site’s new resources.
NEW BRIEF: “PROVIDING HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED NUTRITION SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME OLDER ADULTS: PROMISING HEALTH PLAN PRACTICES”

From the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD): The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) has published a brief about the role of health plans in providing nutrition services to lower-income adults. This brief is based on a series of interviews with Medicaid managed health plans and explores the effectiveness of various practices Medicaid uses to meet the nutritional needs of this population. Best practices identified include hiring staff with strong nutrition experience, using assessments to create targeted interventions, adapting effective programs from other populations, and utilizing community resources. This paper also identifies Medicaid partnerships with community-based organizations as a particularly promising practice. Click here to access the brief.

NATIONAL BLUEPRINT STILL AVAILABLE!

In response to requests we have been getting, we would emphasize that the National Blueprint: Achieving Quality Malnutrition Care for Older Adults is still available, along with a supporting infographic, here on our website. A limited number of printed copies of the National Blueprint and infographic are also available; please email Meredith Whitmire at mponder@matzblancato.com.

MALNUTRITION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INTIATIVE (MQII) NOW ENROLLING PARTICIPANTS; NEW UPDATED TOOLS & RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Avalere Health are enrolling participants for the 2018 MQii learning collaborative. This collaborative brings together leading hospitals and health systems across the U.S. to support acceleration and dissemination of malnutrition best practices for hospitalized patients. More information about joining the collaborative is available here. Also, the MQii tools & resources page has a new look—you’ll notice a more user-friendly interface and greater accessibility to various tools and resources to support malnutrition quality improvement projects.