

defeat **malnutrition** today 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Thanks to Defeat Malnutrition Today members for an excellent and productive 2019. Over the past four years, we have worked to raise public awareness and policy action through advocacy and education on the growing problem of older adult malnutrition. As we enter our fifth year, we are pleased to provide you with a report of our year in review.

HIGHLIGHTS

We have had quite a few accomplishments this year, but these stand out:

- The Government Accountability Office released their report on older adult malnutrition requested by Sens. Patty Murray and Bob Casey at the request of DMT in December;
- Both the House and Senate included malnutrition screening and prevention language in their versions of the Older Americans Act reauthorizations (the House has passed their bill);
- 14 senators co-sponsored a Congressional resolution in recognition of Malnutrition Awareness Week™ and DMT held a Congressional briefing during the week;
- 36 Members of Congress signed a Congressional sign-on letter in July to encourage CMS to adopt the malnutrition electronic clinical quality measures;
- Connecticut now has a new law which increases funding for elderly nutrition, ensures equitable rates for providers of meals and collects and analyzes data on malnutrition.

More information on each of these accomplishments is below.

MEMBERSHIP

We are now up to **99 organizational members**. These organizations joined in 2019, increasing our membership by 16 (about a 20% increase):

- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American Women's Medical Association
- Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.
- Avalere Health
- Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.
- Defeat Malnutrition Today Philadelphia
- Elixir North America
- HealthyWomen
- Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging
- Medline Industries
- Roche Dietitians
- Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging
- South Dakota Adult Nutrition Program
- Tivity Health

- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill Hospital Emergency Department
- Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging

ACTIONS

Congressional Work

A **Government Accountability Office [report](#)** on older adult malnutrition requested by DMT and Sens. Patty Murray and Bob Casey was released in December. DMT issued a [press release](#) on the report.

14 senators co-sponsored [a new Congressional resolution](#) introduced for the first time by Sens. Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) in recognition of Malnutrition Awareness Week™. During Malnutrition Awareness Week™, DMT also held a **Congressional briefing** co-sponsored by ASPEN and West Health during which staff from Sens. Murphy and Grassley's offices spoke, in addition to other DMT member organizations' representatives.

Both the House and Senate included language in their versions of the **Older Americans Act** reauthorizations which adds malnutrition screening to the Act's programs and adds malnutrition prevention as part of the purposes of the Act's nutrition programs. The House bill has passed the full House; the Senate bill is still pending.

36 Members of Congress signed a [Congressional sign-on letter](#) in July to encourage CMS to adopt the malnutrition electronic clinical quality measures.

Regulatory Comments

We have submitted numerous **regulatory comments** in 2019:

- [Comments](#) to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the Healthy People 2030 objectives
- [Comments](#) to CMS on quality measures for dual-eligible Medicare/Medicaid populations
- [Comments](#) on Program Year 2020 of the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Program
- [Comments](#) to CMS on the Medicare Advantage 2020 call letter
- [Comments](#) to CMS on the Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (IPPS) for Acute Care Hospitals and the Long-Term Care Hospital Prospective Payment System
- [Comments](#) to HHS on the Healthy People 2030 objectives, specifically the need to address older adult malnutrition
- [Comments](#) to CMS on the Quality Payment Program

Other Comments and Writing

We also submitted [comments](#) to the National Quality Forum on their **Core Quality Measures Collaborative**, or CQMC, and [comments](#) to Congress on the **Cures 2.0 legislation**. We provided [oral comments](#) to the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans Advisory Committee**.

DMT National Coordinator Bob Blancato co-authored [a policy article](#) for the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* on **federal malnutrition policy** and [an article](#) for the

Journal's **MQii Supplement**.

We updated our [malnutrition infographic](#) in September for Malnutrition Awareness Week™.

We wrote a [blog post](#) for the International Council on Active Aging, a DMT member organization, on advocacy for older adults' health through good nutrition. We also wrote a [blog post](#) for the American Society on Aging, another member organization, on Malnutrition Awareness Week™.

We sent a [fact sheet](#) to **federal congressional offices** to introduce them to the idea of older adult malnutrition and provide concrete ways to address the issue within Congress.

We also sent a [letter](#) to legislators in **Connecticut** in support of a state bill which would increase funding for elderly nutrition, ensure equitable rates for providers of meals and collect and analyze data on malnutrition. It was signed into law.

We sent a [letter](#) to legislators in **New Mexico** in support of a state bill which would have created a Malnutrition Prevention Commission. The bill ultimately failed in the state Senate, but efforts are ongoing to revive the bill in the next legislative session.

Webinars

We held **four webinars** in 2019 and hope to hold even more in 2020:

- January: [webinar](#) in January on our **policy priorities for the year**. This webinar included speakers Jeanne Blankenship of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Anne Utech from the Veterans Administration, and Carrie Hughes of the House Education and Labor Committee.
- May: [webinar](#) on **state and local advocacy actions in New Mexico and Pennsylvania**, featuring our state legislative [toolkit](#).
- June: [webinar](#) on **oral health, food insecurity, and malnutrition** along with West Health. Speakers included Tim Platts-Mills from UNC-Chapel Hill, Kavita Ahluwalia from Columbia University, and Mario Orozco from West Health.
- December: [webinar](#) on tips and strategies for **building a state/local malnutrition advocacy coalition**.

Presentations

We have presented at **30 conferences and events** on the topic of malnutrition so far this year, including at the American Society on Aging conference, the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) conference, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) conference, and the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference.

Media Coverage

Bob Blancato and the Defeat Malnutrition Today Philadelphia chapter were featured in a [Philadelphia Inquirer news article](#) on older adult malnutrition.

DMT Policy Director Meredith Whitmire was featured on [WURD](#), a Philadelphia radio station, in October and discussed malnutrition and the National Blueprint.

Other Activities

Bob Blancato was appointed to the **HHS Advisory Panel on Rural Health and Human Services** this summer by Secretary Alex Azar. He will be incorporating older adult malnutrition in his work on this panel.

Meredith Whitmire was appointed to the **Trinity Health Nutrition Advisory Council** this summer. Trinity Health is a DMT member.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We are excited to continue working on federal and state malnutrition initiatives in 2020, including releasing updates to our National Blueprint and State Legislative Toolkit, creating specialized malnutrition fact sheets, and hosting another series of webinars.

As DMT continues to grow, we will continue to communicate on a regular basis with our members. If your organization is interested in becoming more involved in the work of DMT, please let Meredith know at mponder@matzblancato.com.