

defeat **malnutrition** today

August 23, 2022

Submitted electronically at <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/>

RE: AHRQ Draft Report on Nutrition as Prevention for Improved Cancer Health Outcomes

The Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition appreciates the opportunity to comment, and we commend the National Institutes of Health Office of Disease Prevention for commissioning and funding this report to inform a *Pathways to Prevention Workshop: Nutrition as Prevention for Improved Cancer Health Outcomes*. The Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition agrees there is need to evaluate the evidence supporting nutrition's role as prevention in improved cancer health outcomes. Therefore, we submit our comments in support of publishing this Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Draft Report to help strengthen the research framework for improved cancer care practice and policy.

Defeat Malnutrition Today is a coalition of over 120 members committed to defeating older adult malnutrition across the continuum of care. We are a diverse alliance of stakeholders and organizations working to achieve a greater focus on malnutrition screening, diagnosis, and intervention through regulatory and/or legislative change across the nation's health care system.

The burden of cancer continues to rise and is expected to become a leading barrier to increased life expectancy. (1) This may disproportionately impact older adults because the older adult population has higher cancer incidence (2) and malnutrition prevalence. (3) We agree with the Draft Report's statement "Because cancer risk increases with age, the rapidly growing older population in the United States will increase demand for cancer care and, by extension, nutrition support, over the coming decades."

We were pleased to see that the Draft Report considered the effect of nutrition interventions prior to/during cancer treatment on associated symptoms including functional status and quality of life. While the high heterogeneity in studies reviewed prevented a meta-analysis, such outcomes are important to consider particularly since the outcomes can also be impacted by increasing age. Additional outcomes impacted by increasing age that also remain important to consider for patients with cancer are body composition and muscle mass, although again high heterogeneity in studies reviewed prevented a meta-analysis.

As a Coalition focused on achieving greater focus on malnutrition screening and intervention we agree with the background and premise for this systematic review, that for patients with cancer malnutrition is associated with decreased treatment completion, more use of healthcare, and worse survival. And that while malnutrition prevalence is high for patients with cancer, many do not receive nutrition support or intervention. To that end we look forward to sharing the Final Report with our Coalition members and urging them to support coordinated efforts and further research to strengthen the guidelines for clinical practices and policies for nutrition interventions that benefit older adults with cancer.

Sincerely,
Bob Blancato



National Coordinator
Defeat Malnutrition Today