

JANUARY 2020

MALNUTRITION CONNECTION

Providing Malnutrition Awareness and Advocacy Information to Share

GAO Report: Agencies Could Do More to Help Address the Nutritional Needs of Older Adults

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a new report, "[Nutrition Assistance Programs: Agencies Could Do More to Help Address the Nutritional Needs of Older Adults.](#)"

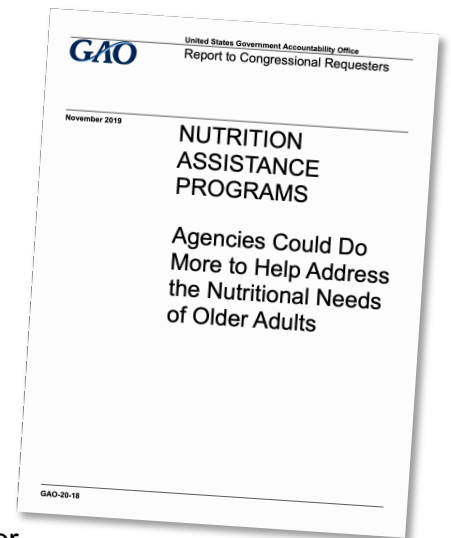
The report discussed how the U.S. population is aging and that by 2030, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that one in five Americans will be 65 or older. Most older adults have more than one chronic condition, such as diabetes or heart disease. Recognizing that adequate nutrition is critical to health, physical ability, and quality of life, the federal government funds various programs to provide nutrition assistance to older adults through meals, food packages, or assistance to purchase food. As the population ages, demand for these federal nutrition assistance programs will increase, but federal nutrition guidelines do not sufficiently focus on the nutrition needs of all older adults, particularly those with chronic conditions.

As older adults age, they may also face barriers, such as a reduced appetite, impairing their ability to meet their nutritional needs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) plans to focus on older adults in a future update to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans but has not documented a plan for doing so. Documenting such a plan could help ensure dietary guidelines better address the needs of the population.

GAO provided five specific [recommendations](#), which were generally agreed with by HHS and USDA:

- The ACL Administrator should work with other HHS officials to document plans to focus on nutritional needs of older adults in the 2025-2030 update of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans;
- The ACL Administrator should direct ACL regional offices to ensure states are monitoring the nutrition content of meals provided in the congregate and home-delivered meals programs;
- The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) should improve oversight of CACFP meals in adult day settings;
- ACL should centralize a location for information on meeting nutrition needs of older adult participants in congregate and home-delivered meals programs, potentially in one location on the website of the federal National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging;
- FNS should better disseminate existing information on nutrition needs of older adults to CACFP providers.

GAO - Government Accountability Office
 HHS - Department of Health and Human Services
 USDA - United States Department of Agriculture
 ACL - Administration for Community Living
 FNS - Food and Nutrition Service
 CACFP - Child and Adult Care Food Program



Want to learn more about the GAO Report?

On Tuesday, January 28 at 2 PM EST, Defeat Malnutrition Today is hosting a webinar entitled "GAO Report Discussion: What's Next for Federal Senior Nutrition Programs?" to highlight the [GAO report](#). There will be a discussion of the report, its recommendations, and nutrition policy going forward.

[Register Here](#)

In Other News:

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics released a position paper and evidence analysis that in summary reviewed malnutrition screening tools and determined that the Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST) should be used for identifying adults in all settings who have malnutrition, regardless of their age or medical history.

[Position Paper](#) | [Evidence Analysis](#)

Social Media:

The GAO released the report "Agencies Could Do More to Help Address the Nutritional Needs of Older Adults" and it makes 5 recommendations to help end #malnutrition among our elderly. Read more: <http://bit.ly/2Tqlc5l>

