

ORGANIZATION:

University of Utah School of Medicine



**BRIDGING HIGH QUALITY MALNUTRITION SCREENING,
ASSESSMENT, AND INTERVENTION FOR OLDER ADULTS FROM
HOSPITAL TO HOME: IMPACT OF NUTRITION HOME VISITATIONS**

ABOUT US

The University of Utah School of Medicine combines excellence in teaching, research, and clinical expertise to train tomorrow's physicians for the rapidly changing world of medicine. With a faculty of more than 1,000 physicians and researchers and 22 clinical and basic science departments, the School of Medicine trains the majority of Utah physicians, and is widely recognized for interdisciplinary research in the genetics of disease, cancer, biomedical informatics, infectious diseases, and other areas of leading-edge medicine.

PROJECT PURPOSE

To demonstrate an evidence-based relationship of targeted nutrition home visitation assessments and care planning on the health outcomes of recently discharged home delivered meal (HDM) recipients at malnutrition risk.

PROJECT LENGTH

- Two years

KEY PARAMETERS

- **Population targeted:** Home delivered meal program participants
- **Geographic setting:** Urban, rural and frontier communities
- **Service delivery setting:** Client homes
- **Services offered:** Care coordination, nutrition-focused home visitation and care planning
- **Number of staff/FTEs dedicated to innovation project:** 1.35
- **Total grant funds received:** \$240,096
- **Total project period:** Two years (2017 – 2019)
- **Total funding leveraged from organization (cash/in-kind):** \$145,862

PROJECT COMPONENTS

- Nutrition-focused home visitation program
- Care coordination and care transition services

SUCCESSSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Successes

- The development of study protocols, training in-services and resource materials were essential to the development and implementation of a home visitation model. Malnutrition referral protocols were devised in collaboration with the area agency on aging (AAA) partners as well as the University of Utah Hospital and Clinics, considering each partner's unique situation.

SUCCESSSES AND LESSONS LEARNED, CONT.

Successes

- A home visitation model was developed, and is modifiable for implementation in diverse care settings, to address the nutrition care of older adults. This model includes a detailed assessment form that can easily be tailored to the individual site and older population receiving nutrition services.

Lessons Learned

- Recruitment was the most significant project challenge. To gain more insight into recruitment barriers, project staff began to regularly attend staff meetings and gathered in-depth information and conducted detailed analysis of the recruitment process. Through trial and error various improvements were tested and implemented and, recruitment was enhanced.

PROJECT IMPACT

- The most significant impact of this project was the improved understanding of malnutrition by health services workers, clients and their families and caregivers. This improved understanding included the multiple causal factors for malnutrition and the differentiation between assessment and screening. An enhanced understanding of the risks and health impact of malnutrition, and the need for malnutrition assessment to address this risk, elucidated the need for coordinated services.

ADVICE FOR PEERS

- The recruitment process was the most challenging aspect of administering the project. Introduction and incorporation of a new protocol, project staff representation at staff meetings of all partner organizations, required in-depth discussion and planning taking into consideration the demanding work schedules for all involved. Organizations are advised to develop a deep understanding of the organizational structure of each project partner and ensure the development and implementation of a project plan with the appropriate distinct task allocations for optimal project coordination and oversight support. Ongoing assessment and re-evaluation of project structure and protocols, and incremental adjustments as indicated, can optimize project effectiveness.
- Creation of the team-based recruitment processes that were not routine for the partner organizations required the introduction of added staff responsibilities. This meant team input and buy-in was essential to recruitment success. Regularly scheduled staff meetings were found to be helpful in resolving these issues.

