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## Food is Medicine Coalition Symposium 2017

With generous funding from The M·A·C AIDS Fund, God's Love We Deliver hosted the 2017 Food Is Medicine Coalition National Symposium, September 11-13, at the offices of Hogan Lovell in Washington D.C. The Symposium brought together the Food Is Medicine Coalition (FIMC), a diverse set of food and nutrition services agencies from across the nation, who deliver medically-tailored diets to people who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves. Most agencies began more than 30 years ago at the height of the AIDS pandemic and have since expanded their missions to serve persons living with HIV and other chronic and severe illnesses: cancer, renal failure, Alzheimer's, severe diabetes, and many, many more. For this population: food is medicine.

The Symposium is the culmination of the year-long staff development program for local food and nutrition services agencies in how to advocate for food and nutrition services at local, state and national levels, as well as a venue for updates and education about best practices for medically tailored nutrition nationwide. This year featured a heavy focus on FIMC agency research that demonstrates that medically-tailored food and nutrition services are integral to accomplishing positive health outcomes, lower healthcare costs and improved patient satisfaction for the highest risk patients in the healthcare system, as well as on opportunities in public and private healthcare for supporting food and nutrition services for people living with severe and chronic illnesses.

Attendees enjoyed participation from coalition partners: Robert Greenwald and Kathryn Garfield of the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School; Bill McColl, Director of Health Policy at AIDS United; and Kathy Patrick, Principal at Strategic Sense. The Symposium featured speakers from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, AcademyHealth, the Nonprofit Finance Fund, and Manatt Health. Representative Jim McGovern (MA-2, Chair of the Hunger Caucus) kicked off the Symposium on day one, expressing his support for the #foodismedicine message.

On September 13, participants went to the Hill to advocate for the maintenance and importance of the Ryan White Treatment and Modernization Act and the incorporation of food and nutrition services for people living with severe illness into Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance.

In total, the Symposium is a way to unite the advocacy goals of food and nutrition services agencies from across the country, to share new and emerging research on food as medicine, and to share best practices in contracting with hospitals and insurance providers.

God's Love We Deliver was joined by the following agencies:

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, AIDS Project New Haven (CT), AIDS Services Foundation Orange County (CA), Ceres Community Project (CA), Community Servings (MA), CrescentCare Health – Food For Friends (LA), Food & Friends (DC), Food For Thought (CA), Heartland Health Outreach, Lifelong – Chicken Soup Brigade (WA), Mama's Kitchen (CA), MANNA (PA), Meals on Wheels of Central Indiana (IN), Moveable Feast (MD), Open Arms of Minnesota (MN), Open Hand Atlanta (GA), Project Angel Food (CA), Project Angel Heart (CO), Project Open Hand (CA), Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (AZ), The Health Trust (CA), The Joy Bus (AZ), The Open, Door (MA), The Poverello Center (FL) and Tulsa CARES (OK).

God's Love We Deliver would like to thank The M·A·C AIDS Fund for generously funding this year's Symposium and the work of God's Love We Deliver and our sister agencies.

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