

With generous funding from The M•A•C AIDS Fund, God's Love We Deliver hosted the 2014 Advocacy Capacity Building Project Symposium September 29-October 1, at NASTAD in Washington D.C. Hosted by Karen Pearl, President and CEO of God's Love We Deliver, the three-day event brought together 50 attendees from over 20 diverse food and nutrition services agencies from across the nation. Together, these agencies know first-hand that food is medicine and deliver medically-tailored diets to people who are too sick to shop or cook for themselves. The gathering was a huge success and we would like to thank our friends and colleagues from across the nation who participated to make it so.

These wonderful organizations are: Project Angel Food; Open Hand Atlanta; Project Angel Heart; AIDS Project New Haven; AIDS Services Foundation Orange County; Moveable Feast; Community Servings; MANNA; Project Open Hand; Bill's Kitchen; Project Hospitality; Heartland Health Outreach; Mama's Kitchen; Long Island Association for AIDS Care (LIAAC); Lifelong AIDS Alliance; Food & Friends; Poverello Center; and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

It is time to change the way we look at the intersection of hunger and illness in our country. We will not be able to accomplish our health goals without the incorporation of nutrition into healthcare. Therefore, we focused heavily this year on research that demonstrates that medically tailored food and nutrition services are integral to accomplishing the Triple Aim of national healthcare reform: positive health outcomes, lower healthcare costs and people that are happy with their care, and on opportunities in public and private healthcare for supporting food and nutrition services for people with severe and chronic illnesses.

We were pleased to have the participation of our coalition partners: The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School, AIDS United and the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. Representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare also presented.

On October 1, participants were on 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 the major programs of the Affordable Care Act. Our 'food is medicine' message was greeted with enthusiasm in all of our visits. Though we may be achieving success piecemeal at the State level, we have a long road ahead before Congress will recognize the importance of food as medicine and incorporate it in a comprehensive way in healthcare reform. We are ready for that journey!

The Symposium was a way to unite the advocacy goals of food and nutrition services agencies from all over the country, to share new and emerging research on food as medicine, to energize and learn. We are so thrilled with how much was accomplished, learned and disseminated. On behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers – and most especially the clients and their families – of each program around the country, thank you M•A•C AIDS Fund, for making this year's symposium possible.

[View photos from our symposium here.](#)

