

For the past ten years, dietitians in our Nutrition Services Department have hosted bimonthly professional development meetings for NYC area HIV Nutritionists. Over the years, numerous topics related to nutrition and HIV have been presented to the group by our peers and experts in the field. At our latest meeting yesterday, Dr. Susan Olender from Columbia University Medical Center discussed her research on the behavioral aspects of treatment adherence among her HIV patients.

Many factors play a role in the decision to begin HIV treatment. Maintaining adherence to medications can be challenging for many reasons, food insecurity being just one. As dietitians working to help ensure that our clients have enough of the right foods, make better food choices, manage their medications and avoid nutrition related co-morbidities, we appreciate how challenging it can be. I followed Dr. Olender's talk with a summary of the results of a pilot study done last year at God's Love with newly enrolled clients with HIV. Conducted by the Nutrition Services Department, this study looked at the relationship between receiving home delivered meals and food security, medication adherence, quality of life, as well as some biological markers of disease progression over six months. Analysis of the data collected was done by a colleague June Pierre-Louis, Ph.D., CDN.

As expected, food security increased among program participants. Treatment adherence indicators also improved as a result of active program participation. These findings suggest that high-quality food and nutrition programs for the HIV population can help retain patients in care and improve treatment outcomes. In addition to adding to the body of research that suggests this positive relationship, it also confirms what we hear from our clients each day. They tell us that the balanced meals they receive from God's Love have helped them eat better than they ever had before. They tell us that they are now able to take their medications as directed and better manage their illnesses.

We are grateful to all in our community who help support the work that we do that makes the findings of studies like these so successful. It is always good news to hear back from clients the ways in which our program is helpful, our materials useful and our work impactful.

For more information on our nutrition services, please visit <https://www.glwd.org/nutrition/services.jsp>