

Today is National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day, a campaign highlighting the complex issues related to HIV prevention, care and treatment for the aging population in the US. The great triumph of this day is that we now need to raise awareness about the needs of a population that in earlier years, before the advent of antiretroviral treatments, would not have lived to see older age. The great hurdle to overcome now is that aging with HIV/AIDS brings with it a host of issues that are not widely understood or provided for.

After 26 years of caring for the nutritional needs of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), we have learned much and continue to invest in constantly staying abreast of the new challenges that our population of PLWHA faces as they age. The Nutrition Department was added to complement our Home Delivered Meal Program in 1992. Staffed by registered dietitians, the department is dedicated to developing individually tailored meals and providing nutrition counseling and education and ensuring that meals were nutritionally optimal for clients with HIV/AIDS. In fact, it is the provision of nutrition services that has become God's Love signature difference among food providers.

In 2001, God's Love broadened its mission to serve other seriously ill populations. In order to best serve this diverse clientele, our registered dietitians continuously keep up-to-date with developments in nutrition practice and host bi-monthly professional development meetings for area HIV dietitians. We recognize that older individuals living with HIV/AIDS have particular health needs and face nutritional challenges related to both HIV/AIDS and aging and we have taken steps to address their unique needs in multiple ways.

We go right to the heart of the matter in our newest edition of **Eating Tips: A Nutrition Guide for People Living with HIV/AIDS**, which contains a focused section for those over fifty. Available in both English and Spanish, copies of this booklet are free of charge. See our [**publications**](#) page for more information.

In June, with the Greater New York Dietetic Association Nutritionists in AIDS Care Special Interest Group, God's Love We Deliver presented *Thirty Years of HIV Nutrition Care: Today's Opportunities and Challenges*. Stacey Gladstone, RN, BSN, ACRN, COS-C, from VillageCare Health Home, was a keynote speaker and discussed *HIV over Fifty*.

In July, our Director of Nutrition became a Board Certified Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition (CSG), meaning that she is now a specialist in addressing the various nutritional issues accompanying aging. Our Director of Nutrition and another senior registered dietitian at God's Love have joined the Healthy Aging Dietetic Practice Group.

Not only do we help manage the nutritional needs of our clients living with HIV/AIDS, but we also continue to understand their care coordination needs as well through our Program Departments. Recently, as part of ongoing training for our Client Services and Nutrition Departments, Monica Rivera-Mindt, PhD, from Fordham University and Mt. Sinai School of Medicine and Lisa Zullig, MS, RD, CSG, CDN, our Director of Nutrition, presented on how the HIV affects the central nervous system, how this differs and/or is compounded by the aging process and how this has prompted God's Love to become more sensitive to neurological issues in our clients. This presentation was also given to our Board of Directors as part of our ongoing Board Education project.

Last week, we had a successful call with our partners at DFTA (The Department for the Aging), as we continue to develop a protocols for clients who are receiving services from both agencies. And along with our more than 180 linkage agreements with other community-based organizations such as SAGE and senior centers, we endeavor to ensure good coordination of care for our aging clients.

God's Love is deeply aware of the changing nutritional needs of our aging population of clients living with HIV/AIDS. With posts like this blog and presentations in the community, we aim to do our part in helping our community be responsive to this new and growing population.

