

Advocate Health Care Launches Real World Nutrition Intervention Trial

To accelerate adoption of nutrition protocols in hospitals, Illinois-based Advocate Health Care (AHC) – one of the nation’s leading health systems – is undertaking a major study to demonstrate how nutrition protocols can reduce both patients’ readmission rates and costs in the hospital, a goal for all U.S. hospitals.

[Read more about this study.](#)



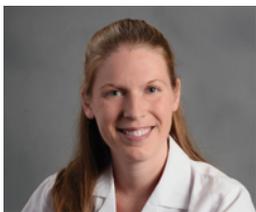
NEW ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) is the first grant awardee of the recently launched [Alliance Grants for Nutritional Leadership](#). The Academy is developing a Nutrition Focused Physical Exam (NFPE) Hands-On Training Workshop to teach Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in facilities across the country techniques for NFPE and emphasize the important role..

[Learn more](#) about the first Alliance grant award.

EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



Heidi Bleckick, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Dietitian, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, Cleveland, OH, is in our Expert Spotlight this month. [Read her thoughts](#) on reducing hospital-based malnutrition.



NUTRITION IN THE NEWS

[Clinical Nurse Specialists Form Task Force to Improve Care in U.S. Hospitals](#), *Advance for Nurses*

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) has established a new taskforce with the goal of ensuring that patients maintain optimal nutrition status during hospital stays.

[Malnutrition appears growing among the elderly](#), *Philadelphia Inquirer*

This story examines the impact of malnutrition on the elderly and how community programs can help alleviate this increasing issue.

FEATURE STORY



Advocate Health Care Launches Real World Nutrition Intervention Trial

To accelerate adoption of nutrition protocols in hospitals, Illinois-based Advocate Health Care (AHC) – one of the nation's leading health systems – is undertaking a major study to demonstrate how nutrition protocols can reduce both patients' readmission rates and costs in the hospital, a goal for all U.S. hospitals.

Announced in Q4 last year, the study will follow patients in real time from admission through 30 days after discharge to determine the impact rapid nutritional intervention has on decreasing 30-day readmission rates. The research is a collaboration of Advocate Health Care, Russell Institute for Research & Innovation at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, the Center for Applied Value Analysis (CAVA), and Abbott.

“Our goal for this study goes far beyond demonstrating what Advocate Health Care can do to improve the quality of care for our patients,” said Tom Summerfelt, Ph.D., vice president, research and innovation, Advocate Health Care. “As the largest accountable care organization in the country and one of the largest health systems in the Midwest, we have the broad patient population to provide real-world evidence of the value of nutrition interventions in improving patient outcomes, lowering costs and reducing readmission rates. No matter what the size of the hospital, these findings should have relevance because they demonstrate what is possible and can be implemented quickly.”

The framework for the new research effort is AHC's decision to implement a rapid, comprehensive oral nutritional supplement (ONS) quality improvement program (QIP) in its hospitals. This program entails patients being monitored for their nutritional status during the hospitalization period (from admission to hospital discharge), with follow-up occurring through discharge to 30 days post-discharge.

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FEATURE STORY *continued*

Accordingly, the Oral Nutrition Supplement Quality Improvement Program Study will follow 3,000 adult patients admitted to four acute-care hospitals, making this one of the largest U.S. studies to gather data on the effectiveness of nutrition interventions in real-world settings. Specific goals of the program are to:

1. Rapidly identify malnourished patients;
2. Emphasize the importance of protein-rich food;
3. Help reduce 30-day readmissions; and
4. Help decrease hospital costs.

According to the study's design, all patients will receive nutritional screenings upon being admitted. At two of the hospitals, malnourished and those at-risk patients will quickly receive nutritional treatment (an oral nutrition supplement) -- 24 to 48 hours sooner than standard practice. The patients enrolled at these two hospitals will also receive additional education, a discharge nutrition care plan and post-discharge reminder calls. The readmission rates at these two "pilot" hospitals will then be compared with the readmission rates among malnourished patients who received a less aggressive intervention at the other two hospitals.

Through this comprehensive comparison trial, AHC hopes to learn more about the impact of nutrition on patient outcomes and gain valuable learnings about integrating nutrition care protocols into practice. The study began enrolling patients in Q4 of 2014 and findings will be released in 2015.

Advocate Health Care, named among the nation's Top 5 large health systems based on quality by Truven Analytics, is the largest health system in Illinois and one of the largest health care providers in the Midwest. Advocate operates more than



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FEATURE STORY *continued*

250 sites of care, including 12 hospitals that encompass 11 acute care hospitals, the state's largest integrated children's network, five Level I trauma centers (the state's highest designation in trauma care), three Level II trauma centers, one of the area's largest home health care companies and one of the region's largest medical groups.



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NEW ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS



Academy Launches NFPE Hands-On Training Workshop

Pilot program trains RDNs on physical assessment for diagnosing malnutrition

Recently, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) was awarded the first Alliance Nutritional Leadership Grant, established to accelerate the adoption of nutrition as a critical component of quality patient care. Providing the funding for the Academy to develop and pilot a Nutrition Focused Physical Exam (NFPE) Hands-On Training Workshop, the grant supports the resources and training tools to help put into practice the novel Nutrition Care Model introduced by the Alliance in 2013.

In early December 2014, four trainers from the Academy traveled to Mercy Health System in Springfield, Missouri, to conduct the workshop with 20 registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs). During the full-day workshop, RDNs were given reference materials, learned from presentations and demonstrations, and participated in small group hands-on breakout sessions and a unique hands-on training during patient rounds. This approach allowed the workshop to be highly interactive and engaging, plus it was held at the RDNs' own health system, making the training workshop convenient and relevant for participants.

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NEW ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENTS *continued*

“We want RDNs to walk away not only with a better understanding of NFPE, but with the skills to perform NFPE, along with a higher level of comfort with conducting the assessment,” says Beth Mordarski, one of the workshop trainers and the Academy’s liaison to the Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition. “We also want them to have the tools, resources, and confidence they need to continue effectively using this approach and to train others in the future.”

According to Mordarski, the Academy designed the workshop with a “train-the-trainer” focus, equipping the participants with reference guides and a packet of workshop materials to help build the knowledge base of RDNs and other healthcare professionals in their institutions and communities. The training team also completed a NFPE Skills Assessment for each RDN that participated in the course.

Having pilot-tested the NFPE Hands-On Training Workshop, the Academy will now make the program available to all RDNs and their facilities in late spring/early summer of 2015. The workshops have been approved for 9.5 CPEUs by the Commission on Dietetic Registration and will be delivered for a nominal fee.

Look for registration information to be available soon on the [Academy website](#).



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EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



Heidi Blecick, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Dietitian, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, Cleveland, OH, is in the Expert Spotlight for her dedication to educating hospital staff on the importance of identifying malnutrition and developing appropriate nutrition plans for patients who are malnourished. Blecick is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Blecick is part of a team of dietitians that conducts monthly clinical practice meetings to help identify and discuss barriers and solutions regarding malnutrition.

The clinical staff continues to play a vital role in educating and empowering other disciplines to recognize malnutrition and the importance of timely nutrition.

By working closely with the medical team, the RDNs at the University Hospitals Case Medical Center, have increased interdisciplinary awareness of malnutrition and the importance of incorporating nutrition interventions into the patient's care goals to ensure the best possible outcomes.



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The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) has established a new taskforce with the goal of ensuring that patients maintain optimal nutrition status during hospital stays.

With the support of Abbott Nutrition Health Institute, the taskforce will develop a white paper detailing the role of the clinical nurse specialist and the staff nurse assessing the risk of malnutrition and treatment.

[Malnutrition appears growing among the elderly](#), *Philadelphia Inquirer*

This story examines the impact of malnutrition on the elderly and how community programs can help alleviate this increasing issue.

Programs at community centers or through meal delivery organizations can help seniors who may be impoverished or lack mobility obtain the proper nutrients to prevent malnutrition. The article states: “Along with lack of food (or a surfeit of poor food), sometimes bad teeth, a lack of appetite from medication, or an inability to leave the home and shop for food can bring on malnutrition among seniors.”



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