



# **How-To Guide: Partnering with Health Care Systems**

## **Why should we partner with a health care system?**

- Give your clients access to health professionals.
- Update your nutrition education materials.
- Learn how to create medically tailored meals or have health care systems provide medically tailored meals.
- Expand awareness of your program and increase participation.

## **How can our program and the health care system benefit from each other?**

Both health care systems and nutrition programs want positive outcomes for their clients. Many of these systems use various data collection methods to assess their success. All nutrition programs collect a wealth of data that includes demographics, health status including nutrition risk and malnutrition, living status, socioeconomic status, and more. This data is valuable to health care systems to help measure health outcomes; one example might be using scores over time on the DETERMINE checklist to develop a health metric. In turn, your partnership can help to improve these scores for your clients, especially when offering services in collaboration with a health care system.

## **What are some potential partnership opportunities?**

- Delivering medically tailored meals.
- Delivering meals for people on short-term disability or recently discharged from the hospital.

- Creating a referral process for both community and home-delivered meal programs.
- Offering nutrition education and counseling to clients.
- Hosting healthy cooking demonstrations.
- Rotating of dietetic interns through your nutrition program who can offer expertise and free support.

## Where do we start?

Evaluate your goals and objectives in partnering. Establish some direction for the partnership or generate some ideas on how you would like to engage. Revisit your strategic plan and decide how the partnership can align with it. Consider these questions, potentially as a group activity:

- Is your organization achieving its strategic goals? If not, how can a partnership with a hospital system assist your organization in achieving its goals?
- What problem is this partnership meant to tackle? What can this partnership do that cannot be done in-house?
- What organizational goals can be met by this partnership?
- What product, programmatic, business and pricing goals do you have for your anticipated collaboration?

## Where can we find more resources?

The [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center website](#) has links to many useful presentations, toolkits, and documents, including:

- The Aging and Disability Business Institute's [contracting toolkit](#) and [sample contracts](#)
- Presentations and other resources on [working with health care systems](#)
- Guides and resources on [business skills](#)

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