Texas Congregate Meal Initiative: Learning Collaborative Model to Impact Congregate Programs, Practices & Outcomes

- Gina Carter - Texas HHSC Access & Eligibility Services – Community Access
- Nandita Chaudhuri - Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University
- Linda Netterville - Independent Consultant
- Yolanda Perez - City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services, Senior Services Division
- Dan Williams - Capone - Meals on Wheels Victoria
Background: Texas Congregate Meals Initiative (TCMI)
TCMI is an INNU Grant Program

**ACL’s Purpose:** To fund innovative and promising practices that enhance the quality, effectiveness, and other proven outcomes of nutrition programs and services within the aging services network.

**Since FY2017:** $6.8M has been awarded by ACL to 29 organizations with the expectation that these efforts will eventually be replicable throughout the aging and nutrition network.

- Increase Participation
- Best Practices
- Results-Oriented Strategies
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Enhance Quality of Life
Why Modernize & Rethink Congregate Meal Programs in Texas?

**Texas Congregate Meal Trend**


**US Congregate Meal Trend**


**NOTE**

- Texas population aged 60+ increased 2 MILLION
- Texas served 24.9% less meals
Key Goal, Objectives, & Desired TCMI Outcomes

Key Objectives

- Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis of congregate nutrition program perceptions
- Increase business acumen and program development skills of selected Texas congregate nutrition providers
- Implement and evaluate a learning collaborative for selected Texas congregate nutrition providers

OUTCOMES-IMPACT-VISIBILITY-VALUE

Programmatic level: Increased business acumen and program development skills for AAAs and nutrition providers; Increase participation in OAA C1 Congregate Nutrition Programs

Participant level: Increased satisfaction and participation; Improved well-being and social integration
2021 TCMI PROJECT
Pandemic Reopening Challenges

• Project Timing
• Program Funding and Flexibilities
• Operational Considerations
• Communication and Outreach
• Moving Congregate Participants from Home-Delivered or Curbside Pickup
Data Driven Decision Making: Program Barriers, Facilitators, & Pandemic Innovations
TCMI Project Phases

**PHASE 1 RESEARCH & GAP ANALYSIS**
- Surveys of individuals 60+ and senior serving orgs
- 29 Focus Groups at 28 AAAs and Nutrition Providers
- Survey of Community Health Providers

**PHASE 2 TRAIN & PREPARE**
- **16** Meal Provider Proposals $2,500 each
- **6-Month** Targeted Learning
- **Learning Collaborative** Workshop & TA

**PHASE 3 IMPLEMENT & EVALUATE PILOTS**
- **16** Pilots $7,500 each
- **7-Month** Implementation
- Evaluation to develop Texas specific evidence base

**PHASE 4 SHARE RESULTS**
- **3** National Conferences
- **2** Academic Journal Submissions
- **1** State Summit to showcase best practices

- **28 AAAs**
- **254 counties**
- Nearly 200 Providers
Stakeholder Input Phase (October 2019 to September 2020)

- 2 SURVEYS: Texas Seniors, Senior Serving Organizations/AAAs
- Community Health Provider Survey: Texas Physicians & Nurses
- FOCUS GROUPS: 29 Sessions including 28 AAA and their Congregate Nutrition Providers

✓ Key Barriers and Facilitators of Texas Congregate Nutrition Programs
✓ Perceptions on Possible Strategies & Solutions
✓ Texas Congregate Nutrition Program Innovation Examples
# WHY DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION?
Lack of Awareness, Transportation, Marketing; Changing Senior Demographics & Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior (60+) Survey</th>
<th>Meal Providers Survey</th>
<th>Community Health Provider Survey</th>
<th>Stakeholder Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Aware (46%)</td>
<td>Lack of Awareness</td>
<td>Lack of Awareness (70%)</td>
<td>Lack of Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of CMPs in the area (42%)</td>
<td>Lack of Targeted Marketing</td>
<td>Lack of Transportation (81%)</td>
<td>Lack of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Transportation (41%)</td>
<td>Lack of Transportation</td>
<td>Changing Demographics of Seniors</td>
<td>Seniors Working Longer, Retiring Later, Caring for Grandkids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Younger Seniors have Different Preferences for Meals &amp; Activities</td>
</tr>
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# WHY DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION?
Stigma & Pride, Unappealing & Unwelcome Settings

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel Unwelcome (36%)</td>
<td>Believe Program Serves Frail Seniors</td>
<td>Hesitance to Accept Charity (58%)</td>
<td>Stigma about Being a Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Need Free Meals (61%)</td>
<td>Embarrassment in Accepting a Low Cost Meal</td>
<td>Stigma (50%)</td>
<td>Stigma about Accepting Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma about What Others Will Think (33%)</td>
<td>Negative Perceptions of Facilities &amp; Settings</td>
<td>Do Not Feel Frail Enough (32%)</td>
<td>Staff &amp; Client Unfriendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/Setting Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Setting Dislike (20%)</td>
<td>Older &amp; Unappealing Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location Dislike (24%)</td>
<td></td>
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WHY DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION?
Meals and Activity Limitations

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Meals (37%)</td>
<td>Lack of Variety &amp; Choice in Meals</td>
<td>Prefer Home Delivered Meals (44.4%)</td>
<td>Facility &amp; Operational Limitations for Activities &amp; Types of Meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Variety in Meals (32%)</td>
<td>Prefer Home Delivered Meals</td>
<td>Scheduling &amp; Timing of Meals (31.1%)</td>
<td>Different Preferences across Urban and Rural Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling &amp; Timing of Meals (32%)</td>
<td>Lack of Funds &amp; Staffing for Activities, Need to Find Volunteers</td>
<td>Dietary Issues (26%)</td>
<td>Younger Seniors have Different Meal &amp; Activity Tastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of Meals (19.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Different Preferences across Urban and Rural Areas
Younger Seniors have Different Meal & Activity Tastes
### WHAT WORKS IN INCREASING PARTICIPATION?
Regional Adaptations & Strategic Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Key Strategies and Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Senior (60+)**  
Survey | - Mailings about CMPs (52%)
- Local TV Coverages (37%)
- Faith Based Organizations/Places of Worship Could Help Market CMPs (35%) |
| **Organizational**  
Survey | - Creative Outreach to the Community
- Friends and Family are Key in Increasing Participation |
| **Community Health Provider**  
Survey | - Community Outreach (66%)
- Improved Programming Options
- Market to Friends and Family (71%)
- Market to Medical Community (40%) |
| **Stakeholder Focus Groups** | - Diverse Programming
- Intergenerational Programming
- Ask the Seniors What They Want/Survey Seniors
- Consider Continuous & Consistent Marketing |
### WHAT WORKS IN INCREASING PARTICIPATION?

**Revitalization of Activities & Settings**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly and Welcoming Ambience</td>
<td>Nontraditional &amp; Welcoming Setting</td>
<td>Use Places of Worship, Older Adult Housing and Community Centers</td>
<td>Friendly Staff &amp; Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining Activities</td>
<td>Nice Facilities that Can Offer Activities</td>
<td>Improve Overall Programing</td>
<td>Volunteer Opportunities so Seniors Feel Valued in Helping Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging &amp; Helpful Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure Location has Transportation &amp; Easy Access</td>
<td>Free Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Activities with Talking and Sharing Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Local Restaurants for Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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- Use Places of Worship, Older Adult Housing and Community Centers
- Improve Overall Programming
- Ensure Location has Transportation & Easy Access
- Friendly Staff & Location
- Volunteer Opportunities so Seniors Feel Valued in Helping Others
- Free Internet
- Social Activities with Talking and Sharing Opportunities
WHAT WORKS IN INCREASING PARTICIPATION?
Updating & Creative Rethinking of Meals

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Variety and Diverse Menu Choices</td>
<td>Variety &amp; Appeal in Meal Choices</td>
<td>Improved Meal Quality</td>
<td>Thoughtful and Creative Menu Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Scheduling &amp; Timing of Meals</td>
<td>Easy Reservation &amp; Access</td>
<td>Meal Timing &amp; Flexibility</td>
<td>Varied Meal Timings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimic Restaurant Setting Meals, not Institutional Type Meals</td>
<td>Varied Timing, Schedule Flexibility</td>
<td>Serving Local Specialties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facilitating Social Interaction while Maintaining Physical Distance

**FUN SOCIALS**: Reverse parades, Musical events for people in cars; Elvis impersonator calling Bingo numbers online

**HUMAN CONNECTION**: Volunteers phoned seniors once a week for checkups; Socially distant surprise visits through windows using posters and people in costume

**TECH LEARNING**: Volunteers taught seniors technology skills to connect, shop, access healthcare

**TELEHEALTH**: Programs taught seniors to access health services online
Using a Learning Collaborative Approach
TCMI Learning Collaborative: The Building Blocks for Innovation

Selection of 16 Pilot Nutrition Providers

Virtual 3-Day Workshop October 2020

Targeted & Tailored Technical Assistance Curriculum

Providers Develop & Refine Innovative Low-Cost Business Plans

TCMI Pilot Innovations
TCMI Learning Collaborative Selected Pilot Sites

16 PILOT SITES CHARACTERISTICS:

• Urban, Suburban and Rural

• Non-Profit Organization and City/County Supported

• Single and Multiple Congregate Sites

• Racially Diverse Target Populations

• Program Size: Unduplicated Congregate Participants Served (150-11,218 Unduplicated Participants)

• Program Size: Number of Meals Served (11,386-565,839 Meals)
PILOT SITES RESPONSIBILITIES:

✓ Participate in the TCMI Learning Collaborative to Learn from Subject Matter Experts and Peers
✓ Learn from Year 1 Needs Assessment Lessons
✓ Learn about Innovative Programming, Community Partnerships, Low-Cost Marketing, Business Acumen Building, Program Success Tracking
✓ Plan & Implement Pilots (2.5 K for Participation in Learning Collaborative, 7.5 K for Pilot Implementation)
✓ Showcase Success with Replicable & Sustainable Models
Virtual Workshop: Reinvent, Rethink, & Reimagine – Day 1

Setting the Stage
- Project Background
- State and National Context

Ignite Panel
- Innovative Practices from Pilot Sites to Ignite Ideas

Resource Management
- Identify & Build Capacity for Innovation
- Recognize Flexibilities within the Guidelines/Requirements
- Maximize Current Resources
Virtual Workshop: Reinvent, Rethink & Reimagine – Day 2

**Community Capacity Building**
- State Resources
- Local Program Resources

**Smart Marketing/Communications**
- Principles of Marketing/Communications
- Feasible, Valid, and Low Cost Marketing Strategies

**Imagine & Visualize Program Success**
- Sharing of Success Tips by National Level Subject Matter Experts
Virtual Workshop: Reinvent, Rethink & Reimagine – Day 3

Measuring Success
- Simple Data Tracking
- Project specific innovation measures
- Tools to help follow success: logic model, story boarding

Workshop Ideas
- Small group sessions
- Sharing innovation ideas with peers
- One-page project description as key outcome
Targeted Assistance Curriculum

- Identification and Refinement of Pilot Innovations
- Learn from the Experts - Marketing Tips
- Explanation and Development of Logic Models
- Assistance with Pilot Proposal Development
Four Types of TCMI Innovative Pilots

Technology Based Programming
Creative Dining Models
Rebranding & Marketing
Health & Wellness
### Examples of Innovative Pilot

| Technology Based Programming                  | Developing Internet Skills  |
|                                            | Using Social Media Platforms |
| Creative Dining Models                      | Choice of Dining Times      |
|                                            | Choice of Meal Options      |
|                                            | Creating Restaurant Ambience|
| Rebranding and Marketing                    | Change Program Name & Image |
|                                            | Promotion through Social Media|
| Health & Wellness                           | Health Kiosk, Telehealth    |
|                                            | Master Class Online with Socialization |
Hear from the Pilot Projects

• **Yolanda Perez**
  Human Service Administrator
  City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services, Senior Services Division

• **Dan Williams-Capone**
  Executive Director
  Meals on Wheels Victoria
City of San Antonio: Congregate Innovation

Marketing
- Rebrand to Healthy Eating Program
- Target both current and new members

Nutrition Education
- Development of nutrition education curriculum
- Identify higher education institutional partners

Incentive Program
- Recognize and reward participation
- Outreach to prospective members
Outcome Measures of Success

✓ Participation
✓ Satisfaction
✓ Engagement
✓ Social Connection
✓ Visibility and Reach

✓ Awareness and Knowledge
  ❑ Nutrition
  ❑ Health and Wellness
  ❑ Technology
  ❑ Program Offerings
Meals on Wheels Victoria
Connection Café Pilot

Goal: Expand program to targeted seniors hungry for social connection with meal as an ancillary benefit.

- Programming geared towards fostering social connection
- Development of community partnerships for delivery

Connection Focused Programming

- Component-based grab-n-go meal concept
- Menu development and efficient production schedule

Dining Model Enhancements

- Rebrand: Connection Café
- Targeted outreach to both previous & new clients
- Utilize social media and digital billboards

Marketing / Rebranding
Outcome Measures of Success

- Participant satisfaction with component-based meals
- Participant increased sense of social connection
- Participant satisfaction and engagement with connection-oriented programming
- Increased program visibility in the community
- Increased program reach for targeted congregate participant demographics
TCMI Project Going Forward
TCMI Project Next Steps

**Help**
Assistance as needed to implement 16 Texas Congregate Pilots that add to the congregate nutrition program strategies

**Identify & assess**
Select & measure outcomes, successes and innovations best practices from pilots

**Disseminate**
Share findings at State and National Conferences and other aging network settings

**Develop**
Assemble Resource Guide with key suggestions, tool-kits, and protocols based on pilots that could be used for future replicability, scalability and sustainability
Outcome Measures of Success

Increased Client/Program Outcomes
- Participation
- Satisfaction
- Awareness and Knowledge
  - Nutrition
  - Health and wellness
  - Technology
  - Program Offerings
- Engagement in the Program
- Social Isolation/Connection
- Program Visibility & Reach
TCMI Website
https://ppri.tamu.edu/tcmi/

• Needs Assessment Findings
• Learning Collaborative Workbook Questions
• LC Workshop Materials and Supportive Resources
• Request for Congregate Meal Pilot Proposal
• COVID-19 Resources and Innovations
• Texas Pandemic Innovations
• Learn from the Marketing Panel Resources
THANK YOU!

Contact Information:

Nandita Chaudhuri Ph.D.
Research Scientist, Public Policy Research Institute, Texas A&M University
(979) 845-6759
nchaudhuri@ppri.tamu.edu

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