VDA - Optimizing the health of Virginians through leadership and expertise in food and nutrition

Medical Nutrition Therapy

Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is the assessment of the nutritional status of patients with an illness, diet-related condition or injury, in order to benefit the patient's own health and reduce health-care costs. MNT includes setting goals for the patient's treatment and developing a specialized nutrition prescription that includes patient education and self-management training.

Medical Nutrition Therapy:

- Is **cost-effective**. It saves millions of dollars as a component of treating diseases and conditions that respond to nutritional therapy.
- Is **patient-focused.** The personalized MNT plan helps patients reach their nutrition and health goals within the overall care plan.
- Improves **quality of care.** Registered Dietitians employing MNT apply evidence-based practice and clinical judgment to deliver safe, effective care.
- Provides **positive outcomes**. Patients who adhere to MNT care plans report better health outcomes such as lower total cholesterol, lower blood sugar levels (Hemoglobin A1C), weight and blood pressure. With MNT there are fewer re-hospitalizations and shorter hospital stays.
- Span the **continuum of care.** MNT is effective in disease prevention, reducing disease progression and managing a variety of chronic conditions throughout the lifespan.

Registered Dietitians provide MNT and other nutrition services for a variety of diseases and conditions including diabetes, renal disease, cardiovascular disease (such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol), pulmonary disease, weight management, eating disorders, oncology, pregnancy, infant/child feeding, food allergies, HIV/AIDS or other immune-compromise conditions, nutrition support (via oral, enteral or parenteral routes), gastrointestinal disorders and overall general wellness.

What can policymakers do to ensure that patients who need medical nutrition therapy have access to Registered Dietitians?

- Ensure adequate funding for facilities treating Medicare/Medicaid patients for whom MNT is part of the treatment regimen.

- Ensure adequate funding for Virginia's public-supported colleges and universities with dietetic programs-Virginia Tech, Norfolk State University, James Madison University, Radford University and Virginia State University.