



Advocacy for Food and Nutrition Services

Food Systems Review

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PRESENTED BY:
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Introductions



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Agenda

Advocacy Summary

1. Overview of Ontario Seniors Nutrition and Advocacy Committee (OSNAC) and Food and Nutrition Advisory Team (FNAT)
2. Accomplishments and Current Advocacy Focus
3. How can Residents get more involved?

Education: How do LTC food systems work?

1. Overview
2. Food Funding and Purchasing
3. Food Waste Challenges, Impacts and Ways to Improve

Discussion/Q&A

Our Advocacy Teams

OSNAC – Ontario Seniors Nutrition & Advocacy Committee

FNAT – Food & Nutrition Advisory Team



- Established in 2020
- Previously known as Dietitians of Canada Ontario Long-Term Care Action Group
- Members are Volunteers – including Registered Dietitians & Nutrition Managers
- Over 25 years of experience, including front line, corporate level
- Purpose – Advocate & Educate & Empower

Empowerment & Partnership

Advocate, Educate & Empower – Quality of Care

- Advocate: Push for changes to support LTC homes, staff, and residents.
- Educate: Raise awareness about nutrition and senior care.
- Empower: Encourage everyone to speak up and push for change.

Empowerment & Partnership at All Levels:

Provincial Government (MLTC) – Policy-making and support.

LTC Sector Leaders (OLTCA, AdvantAge Ontario) – Leaders in the LTC industry.

LTC Sector Partners – Manufacturers, educators, and support organizations.

LTC Home Leadership & Staff – Management and front-line workers.

Families & Residents – Advocate for change through FCO and OARC.

What has OSNAC been working on..

- **Education** – Ministry of LTC Inspectors, Staffing Technical Advisory Table
- **LTC Sector Webinars & Presentations** – Advocacy topics for AdvantAge Ontario, Ontario LTC Association, Ontario Association of Residents Councils, Family Councils of Ontario, and others
- **Collaborating/Presenting/Mentoring/Advocacy** – Canadian Society of Nutrition Management, Gerontology Network of Dietitians of Canada, Ontario Universities, Canadian Malnutrition Task Force, Sysco, Gordon Food Services. etc.

What has OSNAC been working on..

- **Dietary Staff Training Modules**

- Online Dietary staff education modules, partnering with Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in LTC (CLRI) and Surge Learning
- Topics Include;
 - Overview of Long-Term Care and Food Services
 - Diet, Food Texture, and Fluid Consistency in Long-Term Care
 - Dysphagia and Eating Safely (available in late spring)
- Resident perspective about the dining experience incorporated in the [video](#)
- Anyone can access these modules, free of charge.

OSNAC's Current Focus

Food:

- Increased funds for nutritional support budget (food)
- Annual nutritional support increases using evidence-based needs assessments
- Oral Nutrition supplements (Ensure, Boost etc) to be removed from nutritional support budget

Staffing:

- More funding for dietary staff to enhance meal service and dining
- More time for Nutrition Manager to oversee and support staff
- More time for Registered Dietitians to focus on clinical nutrition and be proactive in providing individualized nutrition care
- More hours specifically for cooks

OSNAC's Current Focus

Long-Term Care Sector Survey addressing staffing & nutrition funding in LTC

Released February 26th 2025 – awaiting results

Purpose of the Survey:

- Gather feedback from the long-term care sector about challenges in food services.
- Focus on staffing issues and food funding and the impact on meal quality, dining and nutrition.

Nutrition Support Funding:

- Evaluate if current funding for nutrition support is adequate.
 - The sector has been advising it is not sufficient
- Look at how funding affects the quality and variety of meals served.

OSNAC's Current Focus

Key Areas of Focus:

- Staffing shortages in food service roles.
- Impact on residents' access to nutritious, well-balanced meals.
- Identifying areas where improvement is needed.

Goal:

- Provide recommendations to the Ministry of Long-Term Care about reviewing and adjusting funding.
- Advocate for better support to ensure residents receive the best nutrition and care.

Why It Matters for Residents & Families:

- Advocating for high-quality meals for better health and well-being.
- Strengthens the care environment by addressing staffing and funding gaps.

OSNAC's Current Focus

Building Partnerships in Advocacy:

- Advocacy letter developed with OARC
 - Focus on increase funding for dietary staffing
 - Sent to the Ministry in Sept/24
- Continuing to build relationships and partnerships with the Ministry of Long-Term Care
 - Advocate for enhanced services and funding to meet resident needs
- Currently drafting a letter that focusses on food budget advocacy
- Continue to connect with other sector leaders to discuss potential partnerships

Partnerships



Sponsors



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How Do I Find OSNAC Resources?

- **OSNAC/FNAT Website – free to all – www.osnac-fnat.com**
 - Best Practices documents
 - Menu planning
 - 11 clinical topics, 3 food service topics
 - all with customizable tools and downloadable resources
 - Other documents/training materials
 - including Ministry updates, eating assistance training module, preparing for Ministry inspection etc.
 - Updated frequently with new resources and presentations
- **Social Media** – Facebook, Instagram, Linked In
- **Email – osnac.fnat@gmail.com**

How Can Residents Get Involved?

Some ways residents can get involved in food service staffing and funding advocacy:

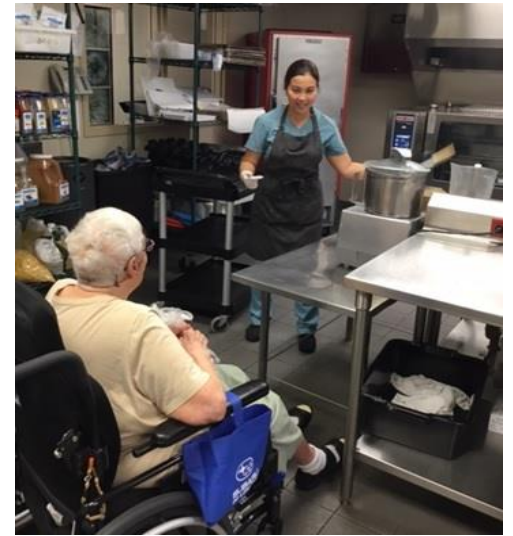
- **Speak with Family and Friends:**
 - Encourage them to support advocacy efforts or reach out to policymakers regarding food service and funding challenges in long-term care
- **Join Residents' Council:**
 - Represent fellow residents by bringing food service concerns to management and advocating for better nutrition and staffing.
- **Engage in Letter-Writing Campaigns:**
 - Write letters or sign petitions to the Ministry of Long-Term Care, urging improvements in food service and funding for better nutrition.

How Can Residents Get Involved?

Some ways residents can get involved in food service staffing and funding advocacy:

- **Collaborate with Food Service Leadership Teams:**
 - Offer feedback directly to food service staff about meal preferences and quality, helping improve meal experiences.
 - Request to learn more about process and how you can become more involved
- **Advocate Through Resident Associations:**
 - Work with organizations like OARC to push for policy changes and better funding to ensure high-quality food services in long-term care homes.





Long-Term Care Food Systems Overview



How is Food Funding Spent?

- Money is provided by the Ministry of LTC to cover food cost per resident per day
- This funding now called “Nutritional Support” by the Ministry
 - Currently the funding amount is \$13.07 per resident per day
- Concerns Identified
 - Funding provided does not keep up with inflation as there is no formal annual review process
 - Factors effecting the ability to control food costs include:
 - Wanting to provide resident preferences
 - Meeting special diet and texture requirements
 - Rising food costs
- The Nutrition Manager carefully considers cost, nutrition content, quality and resident preferences when purchasing food for the menu

Food Purchasing

- Most homes order food from large food distributors at wholesale prices to keep costs down, examples include:
 - Sysco
 - Gordon Food Services
- Most homes use a “purchasing group”
 - prices are negotiated on behalf of a large number of LTC homes to keep prices lower
- All manufacturers and distributors (suppliers) must be licensed, providing refrigeration and freezer sections of the delivery trucks if needed
- Most homes provide a mix of cooking from scratch and use of convenience items
 - this may depend on time to prepare meal and type of equipment in the kitchen as well as their labour hours available

What Does the Funding Cover?

- **All foods for meals and snacks** as listed on menu
 - Including all menu substitutions for special diets, textures, religious or cultural accommodations, ethnic foods etc.
 - All ingredients, spices, herbs, oils, sauces, dressings, other condiments etc. used to make the meals
- **All drinks offered throughout the day** including thickened fluids
- **All oral nutritional supplements**
 - Often needed for higher calorie and protein interventions
 - Drinks, puddings, powders etc.
- Food and drinks used by Nurses to administer medications
- Enteral (tube) feeding formulas

Food Production and Choice

- Every resident in the dining room should have choice at meals
 - This is outlined in the Fixing Long-Term Care Act (2021)
- Nutrition Mangers estimate the amount of food that will be required for each meal service
 - Challenging task at times
 - Forecasting tools beneficial
 - Popularity assessments
 - Waste audit assessments
 - Feedback from residents and staff

Food Production and Choice

- A 10-15% increase in the food counts per home area
 - Often sent to ensure there is enough servings of 1 particular item to enhance choice.
- If homes are using show plates this will also be included in the extra servings sent
 - show plate food can not be served as it is not held to temperature
- Unused food is not allowed to be reused for other meals
 - Some homes exploring composting and donation options were appropriate
 - There are no “leftovers” served in long term care, as per public health guidelines

Food Waste: Challenges and Impact

Challenges many homes face:

- **Overproduction:**
 - Homes can prepare too much food, leading to excess waste.
- **Resident Preferences:**
 - Varying tastes and dietary needs make it difficult to predict the number of servings required accurately.
- **Portion Sizes:**
 - Larger portions may not match residents' appetites, leading to plate waste
- **Dietary Restrictions:**
 - Special dietary needs may limit food choices or increased waste if additional choice is added.
- **Manual Adjustments:**
 - Homes often rely on manual adjustments, leading to inefficiencies in meeting residents' needs without overproduction.

Food Waste: Challenges and Impact

Potential Impact on Food Budget:

- **Increased Costs:**
 - Wasted food means higher costs for purchasing and preparing meals.
- **Strain on Resources:**
 - Limited budget is stretched further when food waste is not minimized.

Difficulty in Tracking and Adjusting Production:

- **Can be Difficult to Predict Demand:**
 - Changes in residents' appetite or preferences make it hard to plan meal quantities throughout a menu cycle
- **Tracking Issues:**
 - Limited systems to track food waste and popularity make it difficult to adjust production to actual needs.

Food Waste: Ways to Improve

Improving Food Waste Management in Long-Term Care Homes

Better Planning and Forecasting:

- Use data and past meal consumption trends to predict food needs more accurately. Establish tools and strategies, such as audits, to obtain this information.
- Regularly review resident preferences and dietary restrictions to plan meals that will be eaten.
- Formally Implement smaller portion options for those that wish to have this with the ability to offer seconds if needed. Ensuring this is appropriately care planned, and consent is obtained.

Food Waste: Ways to Improve

Increase Staff Training:

- Train kitchen and food service staff to manage food quantities effectively and reduce waste.
- Educate staff on the importance of food waste reduction and sustainable practices. Seek ideas from front-line workers.

Implement Waste Tracking Systems:

- Use technology or manual tracking systems to monitor food waste, identify patterns, and adjust production accordingly.
- Regularly audit and review food waste to understand causes and improve practices.

Food Waste: Ways to Improve

Encourage Resident Feedback:

- Regularly ask residents for input on meal satisfaction and preferences to ensure meals meet needs.
- Use feedback to adjust menu choices, reducing waste from uneaten meals.

Partner with Local Charities:

- Donate any safe, unused food to local charities to minimize waste and help those in need where deemed appropriate and in line with policy

Discussion

Q & A



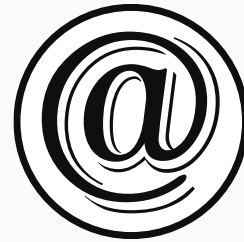
Thank You!



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