

Small Intervention, Big Impact:

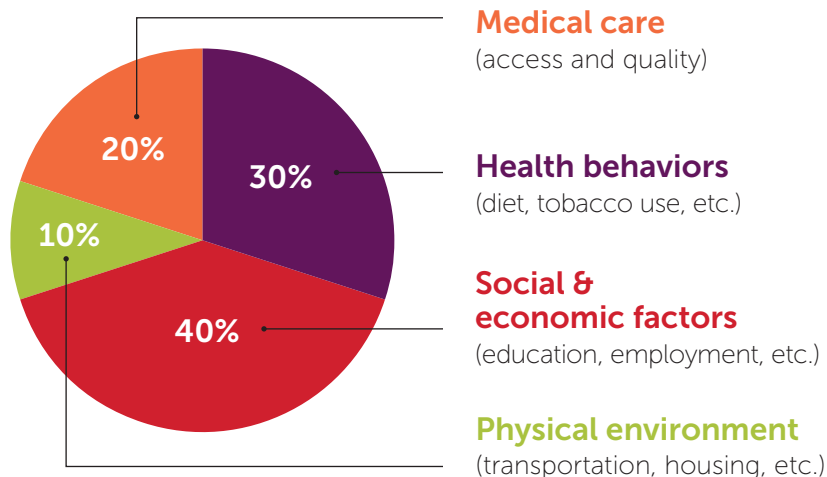
Health Care Cost Reductions Related to Medically Tailored Nutrition

Food is a critical aspect of health care for people living with illnesses like congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes. Unfortunately, lack of disease-specific nutrition knowledge, low energy, and financial constraints due to hospital bills, co-pays, emergency department visits, and medications can make eating right especially challenging for people managing illness. Many end up being hospitalized due to malnutrition or other nutrition-related complications.

What happens when people living with chronic illness have access to home-delivered, medically tailored meals? Research shows this approach has the potential to reduce total health care costs for patients, insurance companies, and communities alike.

What impacts health the most?

When it comes to health, the quality of your health care matters. But research shows that medical care accounts for only a small fraction of overall health. Other factors, like where you live and what you eat, can have far greater impact.



What is a medically tailored meal?



Medically tailored meals are meals approved by a registered dietitian nutritionist that use evidence-based guidelines to ensure positive health outcomes.

At Project Angel Heart, we offer a variety of diets, including: standard healthy diet, renal-friendly, heart-healthy, vegetarian, allergy-friendly, and naked/bland. When you add in texture modifications and additional accommodations for allergies, side effects, and religious beliefs, we create an average of 18-20 different meal variations each day to make sure every client receives food that meets their unique needs.



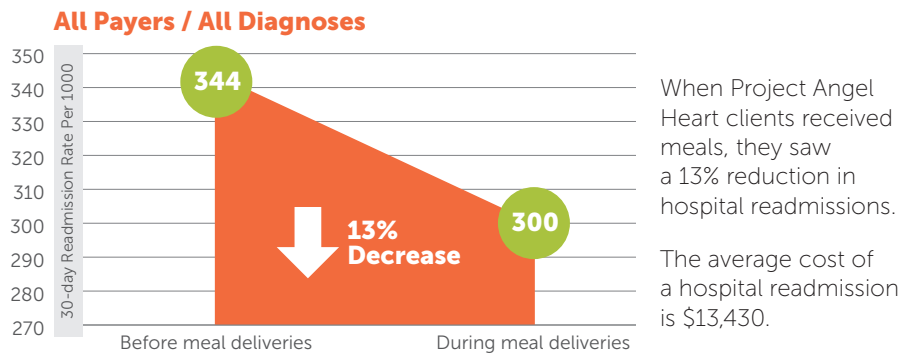
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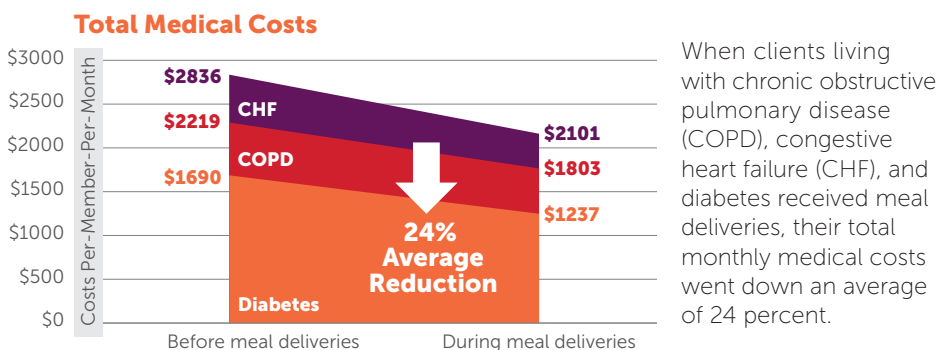
Impact of medically tailored, home-delivered meals on health care costs

Using medical claims data from the Colorado All Payer Claims Database, we examined the health care costs of Project Angel Heart clients before, during, and after they received meal deliveries. Here's what we learned:

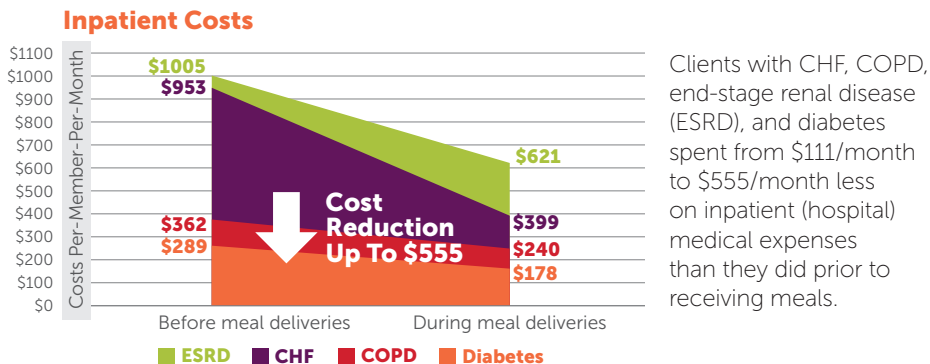
Medically tailored meals lead to a decrease in hospital readmissions



Total medical costs for people with CHF, COPD, and diabetes decreased



Clients spent less on hospital stays while receiving meals



What's next for medically tailored meals?



Based on what we've learned, we recommend:

Integrate medically tailored, home-delivered meals into health care delivery and payment models

Research shows that the right food and nutrition—especially medically tailored meals—lead to improved health outcomes for people with chronic illness, so they should be considered a standard part of treatment by health care providers and insurance providers alike.

Continue to study how medically tailored meals impact the health outcomes and costs of chronically ill individuals

There's still a lot to learn about how medically tailored meals impact health outcomes and health care costs. Additional research is needed to build upon what we already know and to help providers of medically tailored meals continue demonstrating a strong return on investment when meals are integrated into care.

Sources:

"Explore Health Rankings | What And Why We Rank". 2017. *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/what-and-why-we-rank>. [Accessed 18 July 2017].

Barrett, M.L., Jiang, H.J., Steiner, C.A., Wier, L.M. (2015, December). *Statistical Brief #199: All-Cause Readmissions by Payer and Age, 2009–2013*. Available at: <https://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb199-Readmissions-Payer-Age.pdf> [Accessed 1 May 2018].

Project Angel Heart (2018). *Small Intervention, Big Impact: Cost Savings Related to Medically Tailored Nutrition*. [online] Denver. Available at: <http://www.ProjectAngelHeart.org/impact> [Accessed 1 Jun. 2018].



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