Leading Healthcare Organizations Launch Interdisciplinary Partnership: The Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition

Dietitians, nurses, hospitalists and other physicians and clinicians join to address the impact of hospital malnutrition on patient outcomes in the United States

May 13, 2013, NEW YORK – Today, one in three patients enters the hospital malnourished\(^1\)-\(^3\) and more become malnourished during their stay.\(^4\) With policy changes in the U.S. healthcare system driving an increased focus on high quality and affordable care, there is an urgent need to address the pervasive issue of hospital malnutrition and ensure that nutrition therapy is a critical component of patient care.

Five prestigious organizations today jointly announce the launch of a new interdisciplinary partnership, the Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition. The Alliance’s mission is to improve patient outcomes through nutrition intervention in the hospital.

Representing more than 100,000 dietitians, nurses, hospitalists and other physicians and clinicians from across the nation, the following organizations have come together to champion for early nutrition screening, assessment and intervention in hospitals:

- Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN)
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)
- American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.)
- Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM)
- Abbott Nutrition

The Impact of Malnutrition on Hospitalized Patients
Malnutrition increases costs, length of stay, and unfavorable outcomes.\(^5\) Properly addressing hospital malnutrition creates an opportunity to improve quality of care while also reducing healthcare costs.

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\(^1\) Coats KG et al. Hospital-associated malnutrition (a reevaluation 12 years later). *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1993; 93:27–33.
\(^4\) Braunschweig C et al. Impact of declines in nutritional status on outcomes in adult patients hospitalized for more than 7 days. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2000; 100:1316-1322
Additional clinical research finds:

• Malnourished patients are two times more likely to develop a pressure ulcer
• Patients with malnutrition have three times the rate of infection

Yet, when hospitalized patients are provided intervention via oral nutrition supplements, health economic research finds associated benefits including:

• Nutrition intervention may reduce hospital length of stay by an average of two days
• Nutrition intervention may reduce probability of 30-day readmissions by 6.7 percent
• Nutrition intervention has been shown to reduce patient hospitalization cost by 21.6 percent or $4,734 per episode

“There is a growing body of evidence supporting the positive impact nutrition has on improving patient outcomes,” said hospitalist Melissa Parkhurst, MD, FHM, who serves as medical director for Kansas University Hospital’s hospitalist section and its nutrition support service. “We are seeing that early intervention can make a significant difference. As physicians, we need to work with the entire clinician team to ensure that nutrition is an integral part of our patients’ treatment plans.”

Recommendations for Integrating Nutrition into Patient Care Plans

Effective management of malnutrition requires collaboration among multiple clinical disciplines. From nurses who perform initial nutrition screening and ensuring intervention compliance, to dietitians who complete nutrition assessment and recommendation(s), to physicians who oversee the overall care plan, nutrition is not just one provider’s job.

The Alliance recommends clinicians take the following steps to screen, assess and intervene:

1. Screen 100 percent of patients for malnutrition risk upon admission
2. Immediately prescribe nutrition to at risk patients
3. Give every at-risk screened patient a documented nutrition care plan tailored to meet their needs from admission through discharge

“Everyone who touches the patient plays a role in delivering nutritional care,” said Beth Quatrara, DNP, RN, ACNS-BC, CMRSN, member of AMSN, the only specialty nursing organization dedicated to the practice of medical-surgical nursing. “With

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proper screening and assessment, malnutrition can be identified, addressed and treated. As healthcare providers, it is our duty to make sure our patients get the nutrition they need throughout the entire continuum of care."

“We have a malnutrition epidemic in our hospitals, and now is the time to address this widespread issue,” said Kelly Tappenden, PhD, RD, FASPEN, member of AND, the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.

Resources for Healthcare Providers
The Alliance launched a website at www.malnutrition.com to provide hospital-based clinicians with the following resources:

• Research and fact sheets about malnutrition and the positive impact nutrition intervention has on patient care and outcomes
• Alliance Nutrition Toolkit to facilitate clinician collaboration and nutrition integration
• Information about educational events, such as quick learning modules, Continuing Education and Continuing Medical Education programs
• Nutrition protocol examples used to address malnutrition
• Case studies from hospitals that implemented nutrition programs

“Our goal is to provide hospitals with tools and resources to advocate for and institute effective nutrition practices in their organizations,” said Ainsley Malone, MS, RD, CNSC, LD, President-Elect of A.S.P.E.N., an interdisciplinary organization whose members are involved in the provision of clinical nutrition therapies.

“As a leader in nutrition science, we are leveraging our expertise to advance this important initiative. By elevating the role of nutrition and enhancing collaboration among hospital clinicians and administrators, we will improve the lives of patients throughout their hospital stay, and help healthcare providers achieve higher levels of care,” said Gary Fanjiang, MD, MBA, MS, Divisional Vice President, Scientific and Medical Affairs, Abbott Nutrition.

About the Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition
The Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition is an interdisciplinary partnership dedicated to raising awareness about malnutrition and championing for early nutrition screening, assessment and intervention in hospitals. Founded in 2013, the Alliance is comprised of leaders from the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN), the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.), the Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) and Abbott Nutrition. Abbott’s nutrition business has provided funding to the Alliance member organizations to support their involvement in advancing this important initiative.
Visit the Alliance to Advance Patient Nutrition at www.malnutrition.com.