

Modification of Nutrition Program Policy for Advanced Screening

Background: Since 1991, the Nutrition Screening Initiative has provided the DETERMINE Your Nutritional Health Checklist for use at the community level in identifying individuals who are at high risk for poor nutritional status and who will benefit from nutrition interventions. The Division has encouraged the aging network to obtain the services of Registered Dietitians in each planning and service area, but in some instances, none has been available. In addition, even when the professional staff is in place, the need for interventions, which include advanced screening, counseling and education, can be overwhelming, given the sheer numbers of people who could benefit from that assistance.

Using the NSI-D Checklist to identify people at high risk (with scores of 6 or greater) is the first step in intervention. The goal has been to have a dietician administer the Level I Screen, which is a basic nutrition screen designed for social service and health professionals to identify older persons who may need medical or nutritional attention, or who would benefit from more intensive nutrition counseling, therapeutic diets and nutrition support. While nutrition counseling must be provided by a licensed dietician, there are other strategies we need to consider to assure that screenings or some other type of follow up are provided for persons at high nutrition risk.

Policy Modification: In an attempt to provide more options for providing additional interventions to clients at high nutrition risk, we are amending current policy to allow AAAs/providers to refer these clients to other qualified professionals for Level I screening (and higher, if indicated) and follow up. Please refer to the *Division of Aging Services Operations Manual, Chapter 304, Nutrition Services*, for the revised policy statement. The revised language reads as follows:

“The AAA and provider(s) jointly shall develop protocols to assure that applicants/recipients whose NSI-D score is 6 or greater (at high nutrition risk) receive or are referred to an appropriately trained social service or health care professional for a Level One Screening (or higher); receive individual nutrition counseling, if indicated; are referred to their primary health care providers for follow-up; *and/or* are referred for any other assistance or services needed.”

Reporting: Currently the Client Registration Form, and corresponding AIMS screen, has a check box currently labeled, “Nutrition Level I Screening Done.” We will add another check box labeled “Referred for Level I Screening” in the near future. In the meantime, please continue to use the current check box to indicate that a person with a NSI-D Checklist of 6 or higher has received or been referred for Level I Screening. As a reminder, NSI scores are extracted for reporting to the Administration on Aging’s National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS).

Effective Date: Upon receipt.