



Academy for Educational Development

**NUTRITION & HYDRATION AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN
CALENDAR TESTING
ROUND 2 TRIADS
FINAL REPORT**

Presented to:

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Presented by:

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INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

This report summarizes the results of triad group research conducted by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) on behalf of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The overall research objective was to obtain participants' reactions to a final draft of CMS' *Better Dining* calendar. Specific objectives included exploring participants':

- Reactions to two different covers;
- Reactions to the calendar content; and
- Suggestions for distributing the calendar.

To accomplish the research objectives, AED conducted four triads with long-term care management staff in December 2002. A single triad was held in each of four facilities, which were located in Annapolis, MD; Bowling Green, KY; Charlestown, WVA; and Jackson, TN. At each facility, the following people participated in the triad discussion: the facility administrator, activities manager and the dietician or food service manager.

The groups lasted approximately one and a half hours, and began with a brief general discussion of the programs the facility had tried to enhance the dining process for residents. For the remaining time, the participants reviewed the calendar. The calendar testing was conducted in three segments: Cover Assessment and Comparison, during which participants were asked to critique two different cover designs; Calendar Assessment, which focused on the content for each of the 18 calendar months; and Distribution, which examined ideas for disseminating the calendar.

Cover Assessment and Comparison

Moderators displayed first one, then a second calendar cover to the groups, alternating which cover was shown first by facility. Participants were asked about their initial reactions to each cover, in addition to opinions on the relevance and appeal of the designs. Participants were then encouraged to express specific likes and dislikes for each design. Finally, moderators displayed both covers together for a side-by-side comparison.

At this point, participants had an opportunity to select and discuss their preferred design choice.

Calendar Assessment

Pre-selected participants in each facility were mailed a copy of the calendar one week before the scheduled triad, and were asked to review 4 – 5 pre-assigned months. Table 1 displays which months were assigned to each facility. When the triads convened, each group reviewed each assigned month, one at a time. The groups were also asked to provide comments on any other months they had read. The discussion focused on the calendar’s content, including its relevancy, realism, tips and food holidays.

Table 1. Months reviewed by each facility

Facility Location	Assigned Months
Jackson, TN	Jan – April 2003
Bowling Green, KY	May – August 2003
Charlestown, WVA	Sept 2003 – Jan 2004
Annapolis, MD	Feb – June 2004

Limitations

This report is a summary of triad group findings and is not intended to be a detailed reporting of session proceedings. Readers interested in greater detail are encouraged to review the audiotapes.

Triads are a qualitative research method. Their findings are not projectable to the population of long-term facility management staff as a whole and can in no way predict the success or failure of the *Better Dining* calendar.

COVER COMPARIOSN

Single Image Cover

Most participants thought the single picture, which focused “too much on the younger woman”, was “blurred”. One participant explained her dislike for the soft focused by noting that “older people have vision problems” and may find the cover difficult to see. She went on to explain that waning eyesight is something that not only affects residents, but the staff. Others noted that the blue color didn’t work well for this cover because it was “too dark”. Another participant noted, that is “not something that would entice me to turn the page.”

Four Image Cover

Three out of 4 triad groups preferred the cover that displays 4 images, because it was more interesting and “enticing”. Others noted that it reminded them of “being here at work” and their “everyday activities.” Participants also noted that the people on this cover all seem “happy.” One group also decided that they would prefer a picture of “fruit instead of the sandwich.” Responding to the dark tone of the single image cover, several participants noted that the 4-image cover was “brighter” and “easier to see”. However, several participants noted that they would still prefer the blue to “be brighter.”

After reviewing the cover and title, most participants clearly understood that the calendar was intended for the management staff at a facility, rather than the patients. As one person stated, the calendar is “for us.” By referring to the website on the bottom of the calendar, most participants identified the calendar as being sponsored by CMS, “a government organization.”

CALENDAR ASSESSMENT

Overall, every participant received the calendar favorably. They were pleased to have the opportunity to review the calendar and evaluate it. Several groups noted that they had either already implemented or were planning on trying several of the calendar's recommendations. 3 of the best practices already in place at facilities were the use of linens, removing a resident's meal from an institutional tray, and playing music in the dining hall. These were generally deemed successful, because they were inexpensive while having a "big impact." One other facility had also started a "Breakfast at Tiffany's" program, through which they served residents breakfast in the dining hall rather than in their rooms. This program had increased residents' food intake, while costing no more money. Another facility also used "Romeo and Juliet" lunches, when all male or all female groups would dine together for social discussions.

Overall, participants enjoyed the "food holiday" and thought that they would be fun and easy to implement. Participants also recommended some additional holidays, including an onion ring day, a milk shake day, and a hot dog day.

Several participants noted that they would save the tips, once the calendar had run its course. They also thought the website links were very helpful and would like to save the information; "The web links save me time when I'm searching for information online." Others noted that it was nice to have a link to an "official source."

While the calendar was generally well liked, there were months that were "favorites" and others that had problems. The next section focuses on those two categories.

What Worked

During the discussions, the participants spontaneously described a month as their "favorite months." The most popular months were March 2003, April 2004, and June 2003.

Several participants noted that they really liked March 2003 (“On a Roll”), because it was “fun and realistic”. These participants thought that the hydration cart was an idea that could be easily implemented to offer residents a variety of liquids (i.e. “punch and hot chocolate”) and breaks throughout the day. While two groups liked March 2003, another participants noted that while she liked the roller cart concept, she did not like the “cartoon characters, because they don’t fit with the rest of the calendar.” That is, she felt that the drawings were visually inconsistent with the photographs found throughout the calendar.

April 2003 was another favorite month. Participants felt that a facility garden was a “wonderful” and fairly “easy” idea to implement that everyone (residents and staff) can enjoy. “Everyone has grown a tomato at one time, whether in a garden or a pot on a balcony. This is something that everyone can do and enjoy”, because “most of our residents grew their own vegetables.” This month was also very strong visually, because the tomato photos were clear and attractive; “I love the big tomatoes.”

Several participants enjoyed June 2003 (“Growing Diversity Spices Up the Menu”), because it offered them new and helpful advice. Other participants said that while they knew that paying attention to cultural differences in food preferences was important, they hadn’t been aware of easy ways to extend this into the dining process. Specifically, one participant noted that she has a Vietnamese resident who would probably eat more if he were given culturally sensitive food. However, the participants said that they were uncertain how to solve this problem. For instance, they did not know they could purchase condiment packages, such as an “Asian pack or Latino pack” for different foods. Looking for solutions to this issue, the participants thought that the tips were something good to try. They especially liked the idea of having different foods “once in a while”, since they have many people from different places at their facility. However, the participants noted that they would need recipes to offer more culturally diverse dishes.

Difficulties

Participants reported that several months had ideas that would be difficult to implement or simply did not resonate well with them: May 2003, November 2004, March 2004, and April 2004.

May 2003 (Wake Up). Participants liked the content and intent of this page. But, some participants noted that they disliked the title, “Wake Up,” because it sounded like an order or directive. Residents always have people telling them what to do... “get up, go to sleep, eat, etc...” This facility suggested the following phrases to soften the title, “Enliven the senses” or “Excite the senses.”

One facility noted that November 2003 (About Alzheimer’s) did not sit well with them, because the main message was “Fight Alzheimer’s”. His facility felt that while the term “Fight” may worked for a fund raising effort (i.e. a marathon) it is not appropriate in a long term care facility. They also noted that the term fight was inconsistent with the image, which shows a caring younger man with an older resident. Suggested alternatives to “Fight” were “Care” or “Compassion.” Underscoring the importance of discussing the Alzheimer’s issue in the dining process, one participant said she liked the discussion of Alzheimer’s and mealtimes in September 2003.

While participants at several facilities liked the content and idea behind March 2004 (Country Kitchen), they were concerned about its feasibility. Participants noted that “liability” issues preclude them from allowing residents into the kitchen, while others noted that it might simply be impossible because the kitchen is in the basement and residents can’t easily reach the kitchen. When discussing this page, two facilities noted that they had run a “bake sale” with a cookie-baker convection oven. This facility had had positive experiences with the bake sale idea, during which residents helped prepare, bake and sell the cookies to the staff. The participants thought that with small modifications to the month's content, the scenarios would be realistic for other facilities.

Another facility noted that April 2004 was their least favorite month. They were concerned that the discussion of cost savings did not fit with the rest of the calendar; “there’s no context for this information.” While this data was considered useful, they thought it was inappropriate for the calendar.

CALENDAR USE AND DISTRIBUTION

All facilities said that they would like to receive the calendar along with a letter from CMS to notify them about the purpose of the calendar. While some of the administrators receive email notices, they preferred a mailed letter because they “get too many emails and don’t pay attention to them.” Three facilities noted that the letter should be sent to the administrator who would distribute the calendar to his/her staff, while one facility suggested sending the calendar directly to the dietary department. Only two participants noted that they would be able and willing to download the calendar from a website; “we don’t have good computer connections here.”

When asked about the calendar length, most participants said that an 18month calendar was helpful. Specifically, they mentioned that they plan meals several months ahead of time and that it is therefore useful to have an extended calendar. As one participant stated, “It’s winter, and I’m already looking at my early summer meal orders.”

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The findings suggest several next steps:

- Use the 4 image cover on the final calendar design.
- Provide links to websites with international recipes to help a facility offer more culturally diverse foods.
- Add a small discussion about the easy use of convection ovens to March 2004 to make the “Country Kitchen” idea more realistic for facilities.
- Add a sentence to April 2004 to explain how the discussion of saving money and improved health fits with the rest of the calendar. For instance, the sentence could be “Now that you’ve read about a variety of tips to improve a resident’s dining experience and health, let’s see how these changes add up.”
- Add a coupon “dotted line” around the tip boxes to encourage readers to cut out and save the tips.
- Send 3 hard copies of the calendar to a facility’s administrator, because it is not feasible for most facilities to download the calendar.

APPENDIX A
CMS' Nutrition and Hydration Awareness Campaign
Phase 2: Triads in Nursing Homes

FACILITY and PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCREENER

<p><i>Name of Administrator:</i></p> <p><i>Phone:</i></p> <p><i>Address:</i></p> <p><i>City/State/Zip:</i></p>	<p><i>Persons Participating in Triad:</i></p>
<p><i>Name of Facility:</i></p> <p><i>Email:</i></p>	<p><i>Caller's Name:</i></p>
<p><i>Date of call:</i> <i>Time:</i></p>	<p><i>Result of first call:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Left message</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Set time to call back _____</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Facility will participate</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Facility will not participate</i></p>
<p><i>Triad Date:</i> <i>Time:</i></p>	<p><i>AED Staff Conducting Triads:</i></p>

When speaking with the person who answers the phone:

My name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). May I please speak with your administrator? **[If the administrator is not available, ask for her/his email address, direct phone line, and fax].**

When speaking with the administrator:

My name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). I work for the Academy for Educational Development and we are a subcontractor to CMS. To assist CMS with a national Nutrition and Hydration Project we are conducting research in nursing facilities to help develop educational dining service materials. I would like to discuss this project and research opportunity with you, so may I take a minute to review the project that I am referring to?

- **If “YES”:** Proceed to Project Review
- **If “NO”:** Ask if there is a better time to call back, RECORD DATE AND TIME:

Project Review:

CMS has asked that AED perform small group interviews with dietary and nursing management to develop new training materials that will help nursing homes enhance their dining services. During the interview, the participants will be asked to review and provide feedback on an 18-month calendar that has been developed for this campaign. Prior to the interview, the participants will be mailed one version of the calendar to examine the content. All of the comments that we receive will be used to help us finalize the campaign materials..

INVITE TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

To do this research, we would like to conduct a small group interview in your facility. The group will consist of dietary and nursing management personnel (i.e. Dietitian, Administrator, DON/ADON, Dietary Manager). We would like to talk with 3 people for the group and it will take approximately 1½ hours. Each participant will receive \$50 for their time. To ensure that this research will not interfere with patient care or staff duties, we will schedule the groups based on your facility's work schedule – before the start of a work shift or at the end of a shift.

Is this project something that you would be interested in? (yes/no)

If no, thank for time and terminate.

If yes, ...

- Which staff members would you recommend to participate in this project? (RECORD on next page)

Staff Names and contact information

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

II.

Can we schedule a day/time in the next two weeks that would be convenient for us to visit your facility and conduct the group? Record: _____

In the past, we have found that the scheduling works best, if the administrator recruits the participants and we follow-up with a reminder call. Do you feel comfortable doing this?

If yes, thank you. We will contact the participants a few days before the groups to remind them of the time. (Note: that AED will ask participants to complete a mini-questionnaire, asking for their years of service and official title at the beginning of the triad session.)

If no, who could we contact to arrange times for the potential participants?

Thank you for your time, we'll see you soon.

APPENDIX B
Nutrition & Hydration
Moderator's Triad Discussion Guide

DECEMBER 2002
KY, MD, TN, WV
FINAL

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

A. Purpose

Medicare is interested in your opinions about materials they will produce as part of the national Nutrition & Hydration Awareness Campaign.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this very important research project. Our discussion will last 60 – 90 minutes.

B. Disclosure

- Audiotaping
- Confidentiality/consent form

C. Ground Rules

- Need to hear from everyone; one at a time please
- No right or wrong answers; your personal opinions are important
- Be candid; moderator has no vested interest in outcome

D. Participants

- Before we get started, please tell us your name and what is your favorite food?

II. Warm Up (5 minutes)

- What are some of the programs/activities that you have tried in order to enhance the dining experience for residents? [PROBE: Were the programs successful? Easy to implement?]

Transition: You mentioned several programs that you have tried. Medicare has developed a calendar that we would like your opinions on. To confirm, did everyone have a chance to review the calendar that we mailed to your facility? Let's begin by looking at the cover.

[BE SURE TO ALTERNATE WHICH CALENDAR COVER IS SHOWN FIRST WITH EACH GROUP. DISPLAY EACH IN FRONT OF THE GROUP. NOTETAKERS- PLEASE DOCUMENT WHICH IS PRESENTED FIRST]

III. Cover Assessment (15 minutes)

(ASK PARTICIPANTS TO LOOK AT COVER OF CALENDAR 1)

- In looking at this cover, what would you expect to find in this calendar?
- What are your initial reactions to this? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? [PROBE: Memorability, relevance, appeal, images]

[ASK PARTICIPANTS TO LOOK AT COVER OF CALENDAR 2]

- What are your initial reactions to this? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? [PROBE: Memorability, relevance, appeal, images]

[ASK PARTICIPANTS TO LOOK AT COVERS SIDE BY SIDE]

- Looking at both covers, if you had to choose the one you like the best, which one would you choose? Why?
- Can you tell me who sponsored the calendar?

Transition: Now we are going to look at what's inside the calendar.

IV. Calendar Assessment (40-50 minutes)

(NOTE: Each facility will review different months:

Facility 1: January - April 2003

Facility 2: May – August 2003

Facility 3: September 2003 – January 2004 - WVA

Facility 4: February – June 2004 - Annapolis

(Distribute B/W copies for content review)

A. Format

Take a few minutes to review months A through B (see facility assignment above). Jot down any comments as you review it.

- What's your initial reaction to the calendar? [PROBE: likes and dislikes]
- What do you think is the purpose of the calendar?
- What are your reactions to the format? [PROBE: font size, highlighted calendar days]
- What about the photos? Do you like the people/images? Are they easy to see?
- Are the holidays real? Are there any other events they could think of for the year?

B. Content: Month 1

[INSTRUCT PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ EACH SCENARIO, TIP, RECIPE, QUOTE.]

- What are your reactions to the scenario? [PROBE: Does it relate to you? Is it interesting? Is it something you would do?]
- Is there anything on this page that you particularly agree or disagree with?
- Is any of this information new to you?

- What are your reactions to the tips?

[PROBE: Realistic, easy to implement.]

C. Content: Month 2

[INSTRUCT PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ EACH SCENARIO, TIP, RECIPE, QUOTE.]

- What are your reactions to the scenario? [PROBE: Does it relate to you? Is it interesting? Is it something you would do?]
- Is there anything on this page that you particularly agree or disagree with?
- Is any of this information new to you?
- What are your reactions to the tips? [PROBE: Realistic, easy to implement.]

D. Content: Month 3

[INSTRUCT PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ EACH SCENARIO, TIP, RECIPE, QUOTE.]

- What are your reactions to the scenario? [PROBE: Does it relate to you? Is it interesting? Is it something you would do?]
- Is there anything on this page that you particularly agree or disagree with?
- Is any of this information new to you?
- What are your reactions to the tips? [PROBE: Realistic, easy to implement.]

E. Content Month 4

[INSTRUCT PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ EACH SCENARIO, TIP, RECIPE, QUOTE.]

- What are your reactions to the scenario? [PROBE: Does it relate to you? Is it interesting? Is it something you would do?]

- Is there anything on this page that you particularly agree or disagree with?
- Is any of this information new to you?
- What are your reactions to the tips? [PROBE: Realistic, easy to implement.]

F. Content Month 5 (if assigned to facility)

[INSTRUCT PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ EACH SCENARIO, TIP, RECIPE, QUOTE.]

- What are your reactions to the scenario? [PROBE: Does it relate to you? Is it interesting? Is it something you would do?]
- Is there anything on this page that you particularly agree or disagree with?
- Is any of this information new to you?
- What are your reactions to the tips? [PROBE: Realistic, easy to implement.]

G. Calendar Use and Distribution

How would you use this calendar? [PROBE: as part of activities sessions? Menu planning?]

- What is the working relationship between the activity director/ staff and the dietician? [PROBE: Would you share the calendar with each other? How would you co-ordinate activities? Menus?]
- What is the best way to notify you that the calendar is available? [PROBE: email, letter?]
- What is the best way to get the calendar to you? [PROBE: by mail? Website? Who should receive the calendar? How many copies should be sent to the facility?]
- Would you tell colleagues in your field about the calendar?
- The calendar will be available on the web. Do you have access to the Internet? If yes, would you download the calendar and print it?

- Right now the calendar contains 18 months. What do you think about the time duration? [PROBE: shorter 12 months or longer 24 months more useful?
- After the calendar expires, would you save it and use the tips as a reference?

IV. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- A. Have we covered everything about the calendar that you think is important? Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- B. Thank participants for their time and comments.
- C. Provide stipend and have participants sign receipt forms or explain that facility will receive stipend for their time.

