



# Humboldt Senior Resource Center

Nutrition & Activities Program

## Senior Dining Centers

February 2020

This year, we anticipate serving more than 33,000 lunches with the help of nearly 70 volunteers.

On a typical day, we serve 140 people in our three Senior Dining Centers.

### Program Impact

Shelly Heber had an exciting career in Southern California promoting chart-topping rock & roll bands. After she retired to Eureka, she volunteered for 20 years at the Discovery Shop, where she was the Book Lady. When lifting and bending began to hurt, she had to quit. Shelly found herself sitting at home doing nothing, lonely and depressed.

At first she resisted going to the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. She thought it was full of nothing but miserable old people. Now Shelly thinks senior centers should be mandatory in every community.

“The Senior Center saved my life,” she said. She feels welcome. She feels respected. She enjoys the camaraderie. She enjoys meeting people from all different backgrounds and experiences. Shelly comes every day for lunch, bingo, and socializing. She said that in a year she made five real friends, the kind of people you can rely on when you have a problem.

### Frequently Asked Questions

*What meals do you serve, and where?*

We serve lunch Monday through Friday at dining centers in Arcata and Eureka, and Tuesday through Friday in Fortuna.

*Who is eligible to eat in the dining centers?*

Everyone is welcome at the dining centers. For those 60 and over, the suggested donation is \$3.50. No senior is denied a meal for lack of funds. People under 60 are welcome—however, their meals are not subsidized, and they pay \$6.00 for lunch.

*Is the food any good?*

Yes! When asked if they are satisfied with the food, 93% said yes. Whenever possible, we use fresh fruit and vegetables, often locally and organically grown. Increasingly, we make food from scratch to decrease the amount of sodium and make the food more heart-healthy.

*Who typically eats lunch in the dining centers?*

This is one of the most diverse groups of seniors we serve. All are active older adults, able to travel to the centers, although some use walkers and wheelchairs. Some are financially secure; some depend on the meals. Some are homeless. 65% come three or four days a week.

Female	53%
Average age	74 years
Lives alone	50%
High nutritional risk	33%
In poverty	28%

*Does the government subsidize the meals?*

Yes. The government pays about half; diners donate what they can; and we depend on the generosity of this community for the rest. (The same situation is true for Home Delivered Meals.)

- The average participant donation for a meal is \$1.50.
- The actual cost of everything from food preparation to dishwashing comes to about \$10 per meal.

*Nutrition is the cornerstone of health.*

When asked if their physical health has improved since coming to the dining centers, 42% said yes. Health is necessary for independence: we are working to prevent premature or inappropriate institutionalization.

Social interaction is vital. When asked if they have more friends now than before they started coming to the dining center, nearly 80% of the participants said yes.

*How do you combat the dangers of social isolation?*

Half our diners live alone. In elders, social isolation and loneliness have been linked to increased risk of long-term illness, dementia, alcoholism, lung disease, high blood pressure, and impaired mobility. They are also at higher risk of being victims of elder abuse.

Many of our most vulnerable participants hide their vulnerability. Most do not want to discuss their private problems with a tableful of other people. Yet some are actually quite alone and possibly in danger.

A social worker who is experienced with the elderly is available weekly for consultation in the dining centers. She has become a familiar, friendly figure and seniors confide in her. Space is available for private consultation. She has extensive knowledge of the available resources. She refers people to other programs where they can get help.

**Call Barbara Walser at 443-9747 ext. 1241 to schedule a visit to one of the Senior Dining Centers.**

## **Home Delivered Meals**

February 2020

This year, we anticipate delivering 43,000 meals, friendly visits, and informal safety checks to homebound individuals too frail to cook or shop for themselves.

This is an increase as we work to reduce the waiting list.

### **Program Impact**

After retirement, Arlene Roberg and her husband Ole moved to Eureka from central California. Arlene volunteered at the Senior Dining Center for 13 years before aches and pains slowed her down. She remained a regular diner, though. "I've met some of my best friends there," she said.

Now 98 years old, Arlene still lives in her own home. Her knees are bad, but she gets around with a walker and a wheelchair. "By the time I cook a meal," she said, "I'm too tired to eat it." So she appreciates her daily Home Delivered Meals. "These meals are a godsend for people who can't get out," she said.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Does the government subsidize these meals?*

Yes. The government pays about half the cost of a meal, the participants donate what they can, and the local community raises most of the rest. (This is also true for meals in the dining centers.)

*Do the seniors pay something for their meals?*

Yes. We suggest a donation of \$3.50: but people give what they can afford. By regulation (the Older American's Act), no one is denied a meal for lack of funds.

- The average donation for Home Delivered Meals from participants is a little less than a dollar.
- The actual cost of everything, from food to delivery, is more than \$10 per meal.

*How many meals do you provide?*

- We presently deliver 150 meals a day, five days a week.
- We anticipate that as we move people off the waiting list, we will serve as many as 185.

*Is the Home Delivered Meals program different from Meals on Wheels?*

No. We are the local Meals on Wheels, members of the national organization, Meals on Wheels America.

*Who is eligible for Home Delivered Meals?*

Seniors age 60 and older who are frail and homebound by reason of illness, disability, or isolation. Income is not a factor. Seniors are eligible based on need: because they are homebound. The spouse is also eligible if this is in the best interest of the homebound older adult.

*Who are you typically feeding?*

Average age	78 years
Female	59%
In poverty	47%
Live alone	60%
At high nutritional risk	88%

*Why is feeding seniors so important?*

- When asked if the Home Delivered Meals program is important to keep them healthy and independent, 91% of participants answered, "Very Important."
- Since they started receiving meals, 54% said their physical health has improved.
- Nutrition is the cornerstone of health: half of all health conditions that impact older Americans are directly connected to malnutrition.
- Health is necessary for independence: we are working to prevent premature or inappropriate institutionalization.
- And it is a good investment: Meals on Wheels estimates that on average, a program can deliver meals to a senior for an entire year for about the same cost as just one day in the hospital, or 10 days in a nursing facility.

*How can members of the community best support this program?*

- The most valuable contribution they can make is to become monthly donors in order to help provide meals year around. This can be done with a credit or debit card online at [www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org) or calling 443-9747.

**Call Barbara Walser at 443-9747 ext. 1241 to schedule a 'ride along' on a Home Delivered Meals route.**

# THE ESCALATING PROBLEM OF SENIOR HUNGER AND ISOLATION



UNITED STATES 2019

## OUR NATION'S SENIOR POPULATION IS GROWING EXPONENTIALLY



1 IN 5 AMERICANS  
is 60 or older



WITH 12,000 MORE  
turning 60 each day



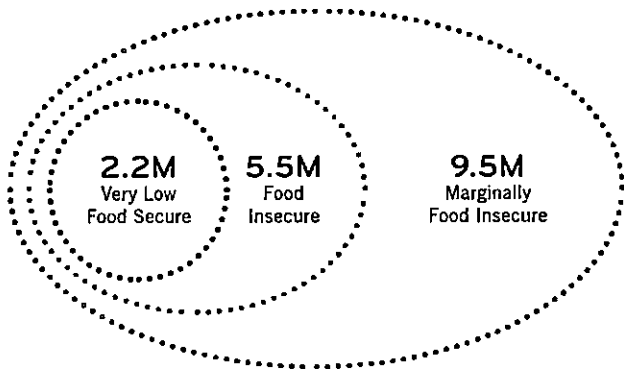
79  
YEARS Average life  
expectancy today

This population is set to reach 118M BY 2060 –  
more than **DOUBLE** the number in 2010



## LEAVING MORE AND MORE AMERICANS AT RISK OF HUNGER AND ISOLATION

NEARLY 9.5 MILLION SENIORS ARE THREATENED BY HUNGER  
5.5M OF WHICH ARE FOOD INSECURE OR VERY LOW FOOD SECURE.



1 IN 4 SENIORS  
LIVES ALONE



1 IN 5 FEELS LONELY

and social isolation among older adults is associated with  
an extra \$6.7 BILLION in Medicare spending each year

## AND WHILE HUNGER AND ISOLATION CAN AFFECT ANYONE WITH LIMITED MOBILITY AND DECLINING HEALTH, FINANCIAL STRAIN MAKES THEM MUCH WORSE



7.1 MILLION SENIORS  
LIVE IN POVERTY

THAT'S AN INCOME OF \$234 A WEEK OR LESS,  
which, after housing, utility and medical  
expenses, leaves very little for food



Older adults living in poverty are nearly twice as likely  
as those living above poverty level to have limitations  
in their ability to live independently.

**THESE THREATS FROM AGING NOT ONLY JEOPARDIZE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OLDER ADULTS, THEY ALSO PLACE A SIGNIFICANT STRAIN ON OUR COUNTRY'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND ECONOMY**



The economic burden associated with malnutrition in seniors



Among seniors, the additional Medicare expenditures associated with social isolation are similar to the amounts associated with having high blood pressure or arthritis



Medicare spending is disproportionately concentrated on older adults with multiple chronic conditions and/or functional limitations

**5% OF MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES ACCOUNT FOR 40% OF SPENDING**

**MEALS ON WHEELS IS THE ONLY FEDERALLY SUPPORTED PROGRAM DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO MEET THE NUTRITIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF SENIORS, YET THIS SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP REMAINS SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERFUNDED**



Among older adults who have difficulties with daily activities, **2 OUT OF 3** receive limited or no home- or community-based care

**83% OF LOW INCOME, FOOD INSECURE SENIORS ARE NOT RECEIVING THE MEALS THEY NEED**

**AND WE KNOW THAT SENIORS WAITING TO RECEIVE MEALS ON WHEELS AT HOME ARE MORE LIKELY TO:**

REPORT FAIR OR POOR SELF-RATED HEALTH	REPORT NOT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY FOOD THEY NEED	REPORT RECENT FALLS OR FEAR OF FALLING THAT LIMITS ABILITY TO STAY ACTIVE
SCREEN POSITIVE FOR DEPRESSION	REQUIRE ASSISTANCE WITH SHOPPING FOR GROCERIES OR PREPARING FOOD	TAKE THREE OR MORE MEDICATIONS EACH DAY

**WE NEED INCREASED FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR OUR SENIORS NOW TO PREVENT EVEN GREATER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES LATER**

Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization supporting the 5,000+ community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network serves virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million staff and volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America's seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education, research and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time.