



November 11, 2024

DC Office of Disability Rights  
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North, Washington, DC 20001  
odr@dc.gov

**RE: *Olmstead Second Draft Comments***

To Whom it may Concern:

Purfoods LLC, d/b/a/ Mom's Meals ("Mom's Meals"), is a leading provider of fully prepared, refrigerated, medically tailored, home delivered meals. We fundamentally believe that better health should be accessible to all and that nutritious meals are a core component to achieving that goal, as well as allowing people to remain in the comfort of their home, rather than an institutional setting.

We applaud the District's efforts to provide crucial services to the most vulnerable of its citizens. Given our mission, Mom's Meals commends your actions to seek public input regarding the Olmstead Community Integration Plan – DC One Community for All. As a provider of home delivered meals for 25 years, it has been our pleasure and honor to have served thousands of District members, through our work with MCOs for both Medicaid and Medicare Advantage members, as well as the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL). As such, we are pleased to see a metric for the number of clients receiving nutrition assistance under DACL's congregate and home delivered meals programs included in the plan.

Programs that focus on nutrition and address food insecurity can significantly affect health outcomes and ultimately reduce the economic burden of overall health care and treating chronic disease. Medically tailored meal programs are an important component to solving these issues by improving nutrition and reducing health care costs through the management of chronic conditions, and reduction of hospitalization and readmissions. Extensive published research demonstrates that access to medically tailored, home delivered meals improves health outcomes and lowers medical spending. This is especially true for certain populations, including those who are aging, suffer from chronic disease, have an intellectual or developmental disability, suffer from mental health and/or substance use disorder, and are transitioning back into the community from institutions such as nursing facilities and correctional facilities.

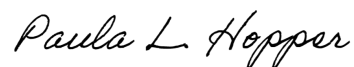
People with chronic conditions, such as some of those listed above, who receive home delivered meals experience fewer hospitalizations, and when hospitalized, their length of stay is significantly shorter<sup>1</sup>. A recent analysis estimated that in addition to net cost savings of \$13.6 billion for payers, a national expansion of medically tailored meals for patients with diet-sensitive conditions and activity

limitations could help avert 1.6 million hospitalizations annually<sup>ii</sup>. Furthermore, avoidable emergency department (ED) visits cost an estimated \$8.3 billion per year, with mental health related avoidable ED visits being the highest driver at \$4.6 billion per year<sup>iii</sup>. A recent study conducted by the University of North Carolina School of Medicine showed positive results for high healthcare utilizing participants who received medically tailored meal intervention. Specifically, the study reported that over an average of 18 months of follow-up, participants showed a decrease of 70% in emergency department use, a 50% cut in hospitalization rates, and a reduction of \$220 in healthcare costs per participant per month.

As such, Mom's Meals recommend that the District add nutrition related strategies, such as adding medically tailored or nutritionally appropriate home delivered meals to existing 1915(c) and 1115 waiver programs, for *all* the populations addressed within the Olmstead Community Integration Plan – DC One Community for All. Fully prepared, home delivered meals can provide both a direct support to address chronic conditions and activity limitations, as well as provide important indirect supports that enhance structure and stability, thus reducing stress for people managing chronic conditions, such as mental health issues and substance use disorder, as well as for those that face many barriers associated with re-entering or remaining safely in their community.

We are happy to provide you with any further information or answer any questions that your team may have regarding our suggestion.

Sincerely,



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<sup>i</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2150131913490737>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2797397>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.hfma.org/payment-reimbursement-and-managed-care/payment-trends/63247/>