**MQii Talking Points and Sample Outreach Letters for**

**Garnering Organizational “Buy-in”**

***Key Talking Points for Hospital Leadership and Clinicians***

Below please find key talking points the Project Champion may wish to consider when meeting with hospital leadership, clinicians, and other key stakeholders in your hospital to achieve buy-in and support for resources to implement the MQii. All of these points are expanded upon in supplemental resources for the MQii Toolkit titled The *Case for the MQii* and *The Importance of Addressing Malnutrition Care – A Primer, as well as recent publications by* [*Science Inquest*](http://www.scienceinquest.com/open-access/pdf/jnds/feedback-from-the-frontline-and-best-practices-the-challenges-and-impact-of-covid-19-on-malnutrition-care-in-hospitalized-patients.pdf) *and* [*Todays Dietician*](https://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/0420p22.shtml)*.*

* Malnutrition is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, especially among older adults
* Patients who are malnourished while in the hospital have a greater risk of complications, readmissions, hospital-acquired conditions (e.g., pressure ulcers, infections), and increased length of stay, which is associated with up to a 300% increase in costs
* Hospitals incur more than $49 billion in expenses per year related to malnutrition
* The COVID-19 pandemic has augmented cases for malnutrition in hospitalized patients, making nutrition support an even more critical aspect of care
* Malnutrition can further increase the risk of poor outcomes among older adults, as age is a major risk factor for malnutrition
* Despite evidence highlighting the benefits of nutrition and effective malnutrition care, many hospitals experience gaps in malnutrition care
* MQii is designed to address these gaps in care with the goal of reducing variability in clinical processes and supporting the use of best practices
* In addition to addressing direct outcomes associated with poor nutrition, the MQii has the potential to impact several additional high-cost outcomes, such as readmission rate, length of stay, and complication rates

***Sample Outreach and Introduction Letters for Key Individuals***

On the following pages, you will find sample letters that highlight the type of communication that should be made with key individuals in your organization: executive leadership, physicians, nurses and dietitians, and patients and their family members. They are intended to serve as the initial outreach to these individuals, raising awareness about the initiative and your team’s desire to implement a quality improvement initiative for malnutrition care. Following this initial outreach, you will be able to arrange for more targeted discussions regarding the expected results of implementing changes to your malnutrition care processes and the potential resources that might be required to implement them successfully.

*Physician Introduction Letter*

The impact of malnutrition on patient complications and health outcomes in hospital settings is significant. It has been shown to result in longer hospital stays, increased infection rates (particularly post-surgical infections), impaired functionality and quality of life, increased morbidity and mortality, and increased risk for hospital readmissions. Often, there are not enough dietitians on staff to address the needs of all malnourished patients, or those at risk for malnutrition, before they are discharged. Additionally, this issue receives limited visibility with our patients and care teams, and its importance often goes unacknowledged or unrecognized. But significant developments in Medicare and Medicaid programs are changing hospital practices and providing opportunities for a renewed focus on the problem of malnutrition among hospitalized patients. Therefore, we would like to call on you to provide your leadership to increase the awareness of malnutrition and its impact on our patients, and help improve the overall quality of patient care for malnourished patients or patients at risk of malnutrition during their stays.

To do this, we at <insert hospital name> are launching the Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative (MQii). This initiative aims to engage our entire care team — including physicians, nurses, dietitians, and patients and their families — to close the current gaps in clinical care that contribute to high rates of malnutrition among hospitalized older adults (those aged 65 years and older). Physicians can help lead this initiative and build a culture where nutrition is viewed by the whole team as a priority for improving care, quality, and cost.

When integrated into the patient care process, nutrition status becomes a vital sign of   
older-adult health and, just like pulse or respiration rate, its routine measurement provides critical information about health that can help form the baseline for clinical care.

To support the MQii, we will have access to a quality improvement Toolkit that will help us:

Establish a multidisciplinary care team;

Build clinician awareness of the importance of malnutrition;

Identify gaps in malnutrition care in our hospital and select an intervention to address them (e.g., enhancing communication of nutrition assessment results to physicians, or supporting better consideration for malnutrition care components when discharge planning); and

Use quality indicators and measures to monitor progress and assess results.

Once areas for improvement are identified, physicians will collaborate with other members of the care team to develop and implement process changes addressing these areas. Teams will rely on you to provide leadership and champion this effort within our hospital to underscore nutrition care as an essential part of patient care. The team will also use MQii quality measures or indicators to establish baseline levels reflecting current malnutrition care and track results of the MQii, so that you can see how our hospital improves over time.

Through the MQii there is an opportunity to transform and redefine malnutrition care in our hospital. We will be able to recognize and treat malnutrition earlier and potentially prevent common adverse events as a result.

As we work to close the gaps in our hospital’s nutrition workflow, and more consistently address nutrition in our patient care plans, we invite you to get involved and collaborate with your care teams to develop and help implement the changes our patients need! More specific details on the MQii can be found at [www.mqii.today](http://mqii.defeatmalnutrition.today).

Sincerely, *Dietitian Introduction Letter*

Clinical dietitians are known for being the champions for malnutrition care in the hospital. As the primary clinician responsible for patient nutrition, you likely witness firsthand the impact of malnutrition. That it has been shown to result in longer hospitals stays, increased infection rates, impaired functionality and quality of life, increased morbidity and mortality, and greater risk for hospital readmissions should come as no surprise.

Despite these significant findings, there are often not enough dietitians or other clinicians on staff to adequately assess and intervene with all malnourished patients or those at risk for malnutrition before they are discharged. Furthermore, malnutrition receives limited visibility with our patients or care teams, and its importance often goes unacknowledged or unrecognized. But significant developments in Medicare and Medicaid programs are changing hospital practices and providing opportunities for a renewed focus on malnutrition among hospitalized patients. Therefore, we would like to call on you to provide your leadership and help increase the awareness of malnutrition and its impact on our patients, and help improve the overall quality of patient care during their stays.

To do this, we at <insert hospital name> are launching the Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative (MQii). This initiative aims to engage our entire care team — including physicians, nurses, dietitians, and patients and their families — to close the current gaps in clinical care that contribute to high rates of malnutrition among hospitalized older adults (those aged 65 years and older).

To support the MQii, we will have access to a quality improvement toolkit that will help us:

Establish a multidisciplinary care team;

Build clinician awareness of the importance of malnutrition;

Identify gaps in malnutrition care in our hospital and select an intervention to address them (e.g., facilitating improved patient screening upon admission to trigger nutrition assessments, or enhancing communication of nutrition assessment results to physicians); and

Use quality indicators and measures to monitor progress and assess results.

Once areas for improvement are identified, dietitians will collaborate with other members of the care team to develop and implement process changes to address these areas. Teams will rely on your direct knowledge of malnutrition care to educate other staff on how to achieve improved patient outcomes and reduced costs through optimal nutrition care. You will also play a key role in generating support for implementing the targeted clinical improvements. It is our hope that you will agree to participate in this effort, help us improve our approach, and help build a culture that underscores malnutrition care as an essential part of patient care.

Through the MQii there is an opportunity to transform and redefine clinicians’ roles to systematically include nutrition and to empower all clinicians, patients, and their families to adequately address patients’ nutrition needs. Please join us in this effort and help our staff implement the changes our patients need!

More specific details on the MQii can be found at [www.mqii.today](http://mqii.defeatmalnutrition.today).

Sincerely, *Nurse Introduction Letter*

As a key individual providing direct patient care, you likely witness firsthand the significant impact of malnutrition on patient complications and health outcomes. Malnutrition among hospitalized patients has been shown to result in longer hospitals stays, increased infection rates, increased risk of falling and pressure ulcers, higher morbidity and mortality, and higher risk for hospital readmissions. These various adverse events due to malnutrition have also been known to increase hospital costs by 300 percent.

Despite these significant findings, there is often no focus on adequately screening and intervening with all malnourished patients or those at risk for malnutrition before these patients are discharged. Furthermore, malnutrition receives limited visibility with our patients or care teams, and its importance often goes unacknowledged or unrecognized. But significant developments in Medicare and Medicaid programs are changing hospital practices and providing opportunities for a renewed focus on the problem of malnutrition among hospitalized patients. Therefore, we would like to call on you to provide your leadership and overall quality improvement experience to help raise awareness around malnutrition and its impact on our patients, and improve the overall quality of patient care during their stays.

To do this, we at <insert hospital name> are launching the Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative (MQii). This initiative aims to engage our entire care team — including physicians, nurses, dietitians, and patients and their families — to close the current gaps in clinical care that contribute to high rates of malnutrition among hospitalized older adults (those aged 65 years and older).

To support the MQii, we will have access to a quality improvement toolkit that will help us:

Establish a multidisciplinary care team;

Build clinician awareness of the importance of malnutrition;

Identify gaps in malnutrition care in our hospital and select an intervention to address them (e.g., enhancing communication of nurse malnutrition screening results to dietitians, or supporting better consideration for malnutrition care components when discharge planning); and

Use quality indicators and measures to monitor progress and assess results.

Once areas for improvement are identified, nurses will collaborate with other members of the care team to develop and implement process changes addressing these areas. Teams will rely on your frontline position to help monitor and improve nutrition intake and response times, and champion this effort within our hospital. It is our hope that, by making you aware of this initiative, you will agree to participate in the effort, help us improve our approach, and help build a culture that underscores malnutrition care as an essential part of patient care.

Through the MQii there is an opportunity to transform and redefine malnutrition care in our hospital. We will be able to recognize and treat malnutrition earlier and potentially prevent common adverse events as a result. Please join us in this effort and help our staff implement the changes our patients need!

Sincerely,

*Hospital Executive Leadership Introduction Letter*

The impact of malnutrition on patient complications and health outcomes in the hospital setting is significant. It has been shown to result in longer hospitals stays, increased infection rates, higher incidence of pressure ulcers, impaired patient functionality and quality of life, increased morbidity and mortality, and greater risk for hospital readmissions. These various adverse outcomes associated with malnutrition have also been known to increase hospital costs by 300%.

Often, malnutrition receives limited visibility with our patients and care teams, and its importance goes unacknowledged or unrecognized. But significant developments in Medicare and Medicaid programs are changing hospital practices and providing opportunities for a renewed focus on malnutrition among hospitalized patients. Therefore, we would like to call on you to provide your leadership and help increase the awareness of malnutrition and its impact on our patients, and help improve the overall quality of patient care for at-risk or malnourished patients during their stays.

To do this, we would like to launch the Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative (MQii) here at <insert hospital name>. This initiative would engage our entire care team — including physicians, nurses, dietitians, and patients and their families — to close the current gaps in care that contribute to high rates of malnutrition among hospitalized older adults (those aged 65 years and older).

To support the MQii, we will have access to a quality improvement toolkit that will help us:

Establish a multidisciplinary care team;

Build clinician awareness of the importance of malnutrition;

Identify gaps in malnutrition care in our hospital and select an intervention to address them; and

Use quality indicators and measures to monitor progress and assess results.

As one of our key hospital leaders, we would like to ask for your support to implement this initiative. Through the MQii there is an opportunity to transform and redefine malnutrition care in our hospital. We will be able to recognize and treat malnutrition earlier and potentially prevent common adverse events as a result, helping to improve our hospital’s quality scores and overall performance. It is our hope that, by making you aware of this initiative, you will agree to participate in the effort, help us improve our approach, and help us build a culture where nutrition is a priority for improving our patients’ care and hospital experience.

MQii project teams would look to you to potentially serve as an executive sponsor and help spread internal and external awareness of our goals and progress toward improving performance and patient outcomes. Therefore, please accept this letter as an invitation to get involved and as a formal request for your support. Please let us know if this is something with which we can help our clinical staff move forward. We look forward to discussing the opportunity with you and answering any additional questions you may have about the initiative. In the meantime, more specific details on the MQii can be found at [www.mqii.today](http://mqii.defeatmalnutrition.today).

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

*Patient and Family Introduction Letter*

The impact of malnutrition on patient complications and health outcomes is significant. Malnutrition among hospitalized patients has been shown to result in longer and more frequent hospital stays, impaired functionality or quality of life, higher infection rates, and increased morbidity and mortality. Patient engagement has been demonstrated to help improve outcomes and reduce the cost of medical care. However, historically patients have rarely been involved in their malnutrition care to help make sure that it meets their needs and reflects their preferences to support a faster recovery. We would like to do something about this, which is why we are seeking you (the patient) and your family members’ attention on this important topic.

Here at <Insert hospital name> we are committed to improving our patients’ experience and health outcomes by enhancing our care for malnourished individuals. To do this, we are launching the Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative (MQii). This initiative aims to engage our entire care team — including physicians, nurses, dietitians, and patients and their families — to close the current gaps in clinical care that contribute to high rates of malnutrition among hospitalized older adults (those aged 65 years and older).

Patients and their families can become part of the MQii to help us build a culture where nutrition is a priority to improve your care and hospital experience. It is our hope that, by making you aware of this initiative, you will get involved in the effort and help us improve our approach. We rely on you and your family members to tell us what we’re doing right and what we can do better to address the problem of malnutrition among patients.

As we work to close the gaps in our hospital’s malnutrition workflow, and more consistently address nutrition in our patient care plans, we invite you and your family members to collaborate with our care teams to develop and help implement the needed changes. We look forward to beginning this transformation with you!

Sincerely,