



Introduction

Malnutrition increases the frequency of wound healing complications, readmission, and overall cost in all surgical patients. This risk factor is of particular concern for our orthopaedic trauma patients who undergo emergent surgery and may not have means or ability to access proper nutrition after discharge. The income for patients with MediCal (California Medicaid) is at 138% of the poverty line or below making it difficult to afford the ever-increasing cost of nutrition (even with food assistance benefits).

The following factors also contribute to risk in these patients:

- Residing in a food desert
- Injury related physical limitations that prevent them from leaving home or their immediate neighborhood
- Toxic stress associated with economic instability and food insecurity may further be exacerbated by unanticipated surgery and recovery, impeding patients' willingness or ability to engage in recovery activities and follow up appointments

Methods

Through a partnership with St Vincent Meals on Wheels...

- MediCal and uninsured patients were offered a direct referral for 12 days of medically-tailored meal delivery at discharge
- Delivery included a daily supplemental nutrition Ensure Surgery shake
- Final delivery provided a QR code inviting patients to complete a survey measuring self-reported satisfaction with meals and multiple measures of self-reported impact on recovery
- The survey also included free text opportunity for patients to provide direct feedback regarding their experience with the program
- **Program is ongoing, launched January 1, 2024**

Results

- 42 patients have been enrolled
- 15/42 have completed the survey
- **14/15 have been able to afford other things more easily while improving their ability to remain independent at home, positively impacting their recovery.**
- Ensure Surgery shake consumption rates are mixed with the majority (67%) indicating consumption every day.
- 73% found the number of meals appropriate with 27% indicating preference for additional days of meal delivery in recovery

Free text feedback themes include gratitude, stress reduction, and improvement in ability to focus on recovery.

Conclusions

While a limited and ongoing pilot...

- Medically-tailored meal delivery alleviated some personal and social concerns while decreasing complication and readmission risk associated with poor nutrition
- Consumption rates of Ensure Surgery shakes reflect strong compliance and nutritional support, further decreasing wound complication and readmission risk
- Potential that caregiver burden was alleviated as well as patient stress associated with needing to secure caregiver support for groceries and meal preparation
- Patients' ability to remain independent while recovering at home supports overall well-being and may have mitigated the depressive symptoms associated with feelings of helplessness that can adversely affect surgical outcomes
- Potential program expansion beyond low-income patients as all orthopaedic trauma patients are at higher risk for developing food insecurity due to functional limitations (driving, food preparation, overall mobility)
- **Future ICHOM trauma measures consider aspects of social determinants of health that affect patient complication risk and recovery experience (such as food insecurity)**

Patient-Reported Impact in Recovery (n = 15)

“Less stress for getting groceries and meals preparation. More time to rest and get better.”

“Nice to know I had meals provided when both my wife and I were incapacitated.”

“The Ensure Surgery [shakes] helped me with my recovery.”

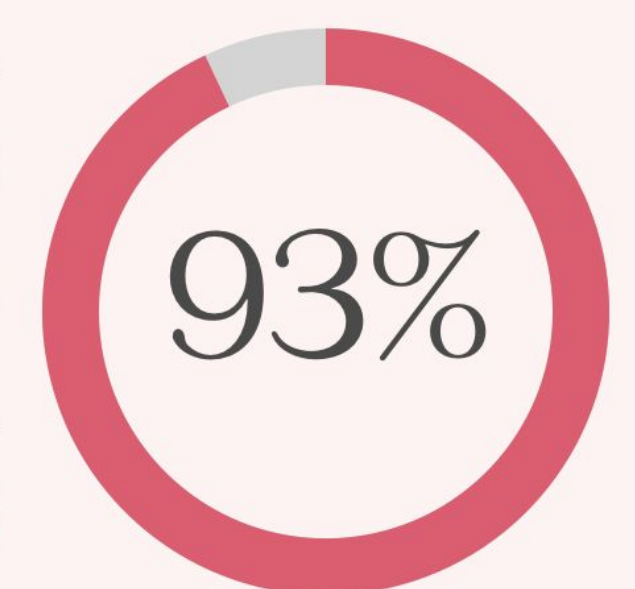
“I thank everybody and I [feel] blessed by this program.”

“It truly helped.”

How often did you consume the Ensure Surgery shakes that were provided?



Improved My Ability to Remain Independent at Home



Improved My Ability to Afford Other Things



Positively Impacted My Recovery

