

Abstract

Project HOPEFUL (Helping Older Persons Find Useful Links) is a five-year research collaboration between university researchers and Georgia and North Carolina's aging services. The initiative aims to assess the effects of senior nutrition programs on health outcomes for older adults by integrating mental health services within home-delivered and congregate meal contexts.

The project will analyze treatment interactions to identify patterns that enhance wellbeing, scale the BE WITH program to new states, adapt it for group settings, and conduct randomized controlled trials to evaluate its impact. Additionally, a new staff role will facilitate socialization and access to mental health services, aligned with recent Medicare policy changes.

Serving at least 1,000 older adults, the project anticipates producing ten journal articles and various practitioner resources, ultimately aiming to improve health and nutrition outcomes, ensure program sustainability, and strengthen mental health support within the aging services network.