

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Nutrition Education Needs and Interests: Perspectives of Older Americans Participating in a Congregate Meal Program in East Central Indiana.

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The purpose of this study was to determine perspectives related to nutrition education needs and interests of elderly people who currently participate in a congregate meal program in East Central Indiana in order to improve the current nutrition education materials that are being presented to those who dine at LifeStream Inc., senior cafes. Subjects in this study included sixty participants from 11 LifeStream Services Inc. congregate meal sites across East Central Indiana. Focus groups were conducted by the primary researcher at each site to determine nutrition needs and interests of elderly Americans participating in a congregate meal program concerning nutrition education and other health related topics. The elderly at LifeStream sites were most interested in having more information about specific disease states, most specifically diabetes. Currently nutrition information is received by many different venues with handouts being the most popular and accepted with this population. Ideas that were suggested to improve LifeStream nutrition education included more one-on-one interaction to teach new nutrition information. Keeping lessons simple and interactive is also important when teaching elderly Americans about nutrition topics.