

## **PENNSYLVANIA: MANNA Launches HIV Nutrition Program**

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The Philadelphia-based Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutritional Alliance is launching in January a nutrition- education and meals outreach for people recently diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. MANNA's "Positively Nutritious" program involves a six-month meal-delivery service as well as six workshops, including nutrition- education classes in a group setting and three individualized sessions. Participants must have been diagnosed in the past year and have a CD4 cell count below 200.

About 28 percent of MANNA clients, or 555 of the individuals assisted in the past year, have HIV/AIDS. Many also "have food-insecurity concerns," said Cyndi Dinger, MANNA's director of nutrition and client services. "And that has an impact on things like if they're going to the doctor and on the overall progression of their health." "Our meal program is what we're best known for but it's really only a small percentage of what we do because we focus a lot on education," Dinger said. "This education will enable [clients] to be self-sufficient going forward." The number of participants will be limited to 20, Dinger said. "There will definitely be a peer element," she added. "If we were to do a very large group, people can get lost in the crowd, but by keeping it smaller people can gel better and build relationships and support systems where they can turn to." MANNA hopes to schedule new Positively Nutritious sessions every few months, Dinger said. For more information, contact registered dietician Nicole Lavery at 215-496-2662, ext. 135.

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