

Strategically Leveraging Health Improvement Within LTSS Settings Benefitting Constituents, Managed Care, & State IDD Services

In addition to quality-of-life and person-centered choice elevation for people supported, we accelerate:

- REVENUE ENHANCEMENT • COST/RISK SHARING • VALUE-BASED PURCHASING MAXIMIZATION

NATIONAL AVERAGE: Only 30% of people with IDD are at, or moving toward, a normal BMI.

WATAUGA OPPORTUNITIES OUTCOMES:

- Over 73% of its residential population of people with IDD are at, or moving toward, a normal BMI.
- Since 1994, Estimated Community Wages Earned (\$6.8 million) & Job Placements (1151)
- Estimated Reduction in Gov't Subsidies: \$2.7 million

For the past several years, Watauga Opportunities has demonstrated, in its LTSS population receiving residential supports, that enhanced nutrition—eating the right foods in the right amounts—is the cornerstone creating a linear cascade of beneficial outcomes, like dominoes falling in favorable progression: improved clinical health (BMIs, A1c levels, blood pressure readings); reduced, associated expenses (food, labor, PRNs, acute care, prescription medications, risk and compliance); enhanced social determinants of health...jobs, community involvement, wellness activities, and socialization opportunities; and diminished supports overall.



The linear and causal relationship is important to note. While jobs and community involvement are increasingly touted as linchpin answers within the industry—which Watauga Opportunities wholly embraces—it's difficult to get and keep employment and become involved in the community without first being, and staying, healthy. It's nearly impossible to get, and stay healthy, without effectively tackling food.

Watauga has strategically focused on nutrition through Mainstay's My25 program—content-based resources specifically tailored to LTSS settings and people with disabilities, delivered via technology-forward means—to propel critical change. Empirical and statistical evidence indicate that:

- Annual healthcare costs for people with IDD living in community-based LTSS settings typically range between \$25,000-\$40,000.
- Healthcare costs for obese Medicaid recipients are \$2,000 per annum higher than non-obese Medicaid recipients.
- Individuals with IDD who focus on improved nutrition and better health reduce medication utilization as well as ER and acute care usage by 10 to 20 percent.

Resident **Bob Shirley** at Watauga's **Water St.** house is an example of the symbiosis between increased nutrition, better health, and robust employment outcomes. Crediting his healthy weight as a primary reason for his vitality and positive mental attitude, **Bob** recently celebrated 25 years with the same community-based employer (above minimum-wage pay). Stories such as these are replete within Watauga Opportunities and typify the interconnection among improved health, community engagement/social capital, a job and/or volunteering, and fewer supports overall.