

I. INTRODUCTION

Low participation rates in the Food Stamp Program by low-income, elderly individuals have been a persistent concern to policymakers. Nationwide, only one-third of the elderly individuals that are eligible for food stamps actually participate in the program. USDA is testing the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations to identify successful strategies for increasing elderly participation in the FSP. In 2002, six states implemented an Elderly Nutrition Demonstration in part of their state.

Initial patterns of participation among elderly clients in the demonstration sites can provide an early indication of whether the demonstrations are successful. In this report, we examine whether elderly FSP participation has increased more than we would expect without the demonstrations. This analysis is conducted as of November 2003, when all demonstrations had been operating for at least one year, and some for almost two years (Table 1).

The analysis presented in this report is preliminary. It is intended as an initial insight into the potential impacts of these demonstrations. Future work will be conducted to refine and test the validity of these estimates, and to estimate the statistical significance of any estimated impacts. Moreover, in addition to analysis of participation patterns, the evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition Demonstrations includes an assessment of client satisfaction (through surveys and focus groups of demonstration participants), a process analysis examining the organization of each demonstration, and an estimate of the costs of each demonstration. These analyses will be combined in the final report for this project.

The remainder of the report is organized into three sections: (1) an analysis of changes in participation patterns, (2) an analysis of changes in benefits paid, and (3) an analysis of changes in key subgroups of elderly FSP participants.

TABLE 1
MONTHS OF OPERATION
ELDERLY NUTRITION DEMONSTRATIONS

| Demonstration State | Start Month | Months of Operation as of November 2003 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Simplified Eligibility Model | | |
| Florida | February, 2002 | 22 |
| Application Assistance Model | | |
| Arizona | September, 2002 | 15 |
| Maine | February, 2002 | 22 |
| Michigan | November, 2002 | 13 |
| Commodity Alternative Model | | |
| Connecticut | November, 2002 | 13 |
| North Carolina | November, 2002 | 13 |