

# Relentless Effort in Raising Awareness: From 2012 MNI Grant to significant milestones

## New legislation on mandatory nutritional screening in public hospitals

Project team: On behalf of GrESPEN's Board, Prof. Michael Chourdakis & Stavroula Chaloulakou  
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### Description of the initiative

- **Background/context:** In 2012 our efforts to initiate a new legislation mandating the establishment of clinical nutrition departments within every public hospital resulted in the successful acquisition of the MNI Grant. Building upon this milestone, which also facilitated the formation of nutrition support teams (NST) at the majority of public hospitals in Greece, our ongoing efforts are now concentrated on implementing universal nutritional screening as the next phase towards achieving an efficient nutritional therapy.
- **Rationale for the initiative:** Currently, malnutrition awareness in Greece is low and its effects in health and disease are underestimated. Despite the legislation established in Greece in 2012 addressing the importance of optimal nutritional care, there is still a gap in effectively combating malnutrition: Nutritional screening does **not** comprise a standard/mandatory procedure and unfortunately, it is therefore rarely implemented in public hospitals, resulting in patients with malnutrition remain undiagnosed.
- **Objectives and scope:** For more than a decade, GrESPEN has been committed to the fight against malnutrition. The ongoing initiative seeks to underscore the vital importance of early diagnosis and appropriate treatment of malnutrition. We are focusing on making nutritional screening a standard and universal procedure for every patient admitted to the hospital.

### Planned activities & deliverables

#### Outline the steps to be taken:

1. Research and data collection (**completed**): Active participation in events organization, research projects (incl. NutritionDay) and campaigns.
2. Building political support (**completed**): GrESPEN's Board (one member of which is member of the Greek parliament), engaged in discussions with individuals within the political sphere and the Ministry of Health, presenting evidence on the prevalence and impact of malnutrition to advocate for the importance of nutritional screening in hospitals.
3. Drafting the legislation (**completed**)  
The law includes: a) the implementation of universal nutritional screening and  
b) the standardisation of serving sizes and meals (e.g., standard, low/high PRO, low/high fiber) provided in hospitals.
4. Enactment of the law
5. Awareness campaign, targeted to clinical nutrition professionals, to ensure efficient implementation of nutritional screening through the organization of LLL Courses, hosting ACCN Course in 2025, provision of informational material, and preparation of social media campaign.
6. Health outcomes evaluation: We plan to create a survey addressed to hospital dietitians and healthcare professionals in order to evaluate the impact of the new law and study possible needs or barriers regarding its implementation.
7. Data analysis and continuous improvement

#### What are the concrete deliverables of the project?

The enactment of a new legislation establishing mandatory nutritional screening during admission in public hospitals, as the first step of early diagnosis and efficient treatment of malnutrition and the standardisation of serving sizes and meals provided in hospital settings.

#### What achievements are possible in the next 12 and 24 months?

- **1-12 months:** Legislation enactment & awareness campaign to educate healthcare professionals about the importance of nutritional screening in combating malnutrition, as well as about available tools for its implementation.
- **12-14 months:** Nationwide implementation & health outcomes assessment

### Resources & enablers

#### Personnel & financial needs

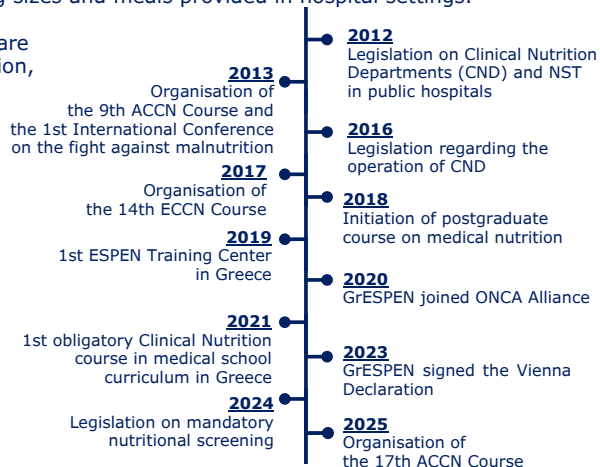
Administrative assistant: Responsible for coordinating and facilitating administrative tasks related to the project, assisting in organizing events, managing documentation, and liaising with stakeholders  
Campaign manager: Responsible for the implementation of awareness campaign

#### Specify how the grant will be spent

Salaries: 24,000 euros  
Material: 6,000 euros  
Preparation of survey, data analysis and publication: 10,000 euros

#### What factors will make it successful?

We plan to launch a campaign with educational materials and guides to assist clinicians in conducting nutritional screening  
As a next step, we plan to suggest a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of the project & identify areas for improvement.



+ 70 LLL Courses since 2012

Additionally: Participation in nDay since 2011, Translation of Blue Book, Organisation of the 1st Hands-on Workshops on Enteral & Parenteral Nutrition

### Results/outcomes & expected impact

#### How will the findings be implemented?

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and National Medical Associations. Our aim is malnutrition to be an elevated priority on the healthcare agenda, fostering a culture of proactive nutritional care.

#### How will this project advance patient care/contribute to optimal nutritional care?

Patient-centered approach: Mandatory nutritional screening ensures early detection of malnutrition, enabling healthcare providers to tailor interventions and optimize nutritional care plans for each patient.

#### What makes the project innovative?

Multistakeholder approach: The combination of legislative advocacy, political engagement, and healthcare professionals' involvement creates a comprehensive strategy for tackling malnutrition, making the project innovative in a holistic approach.

#### Will the project be likely to influence national nutrition policy?

Yes, the project aims to influence national nutrition policy and emphasize the importance of optimal nutritional support by establishing universal nutritional screening in hospitals.

#### Is the project transferable to other settings / countries?

Yes, the project provides a framework that can be adapted and implemented in other settings or countries facing similar challenges related to malnutrition.



Please tick to confirm the PEN letter of endorsement is attached.  
Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

