The numbers of seniors across our nation will double by 2050 from 57 million in 2010 to 112 million in 2050 according to MOWA.

However currently 1in 10 older New Yorkers face hunger and countless others malnutrition. Food insecurity – not knowing where your next meal is coming from – is a constant threat for many seniors.

MOWA reports the seniors receiving OAA nutrition or other supportive services:

* 28 percent live in poverty
* 34 percent belong to a minority group
* 18 percent live in a rural community

These are current numbers and we are all called on to do so much more as we know about 12,000 individuals are turning 60 every day across the nation.

The work can be overwhelming, daunting, and lead to burn out. Our fight in ensuing every Older New Yorker never has to worry about where their next meal will come from does deserve our passion, strength, and voice. However, it is easy to become lost in the service to others; to become siloed off in fighting the good, just fight. That is why this conference is held, so that we can come together and learn from one another and lean on one another. You are the experts, an issue facing this group is already solved or will be solved by tacking the issue together. I encourage all to roll up your sleeves; because we do have esteemed speakers but we also have experts in you and everyone has something to contribute. Meals on Wheels NY, NYS Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, and Aging Services Dieticians of New York State are all proud partners and we are proud to have worked on providing another great conference for you all today. We know we are all making a difference in the lives of older New Yorkers, but the challenge before us will require us to become better informed, more efficient, and believe it or not even more passionate about those we serve.

Our Conference sponsors help us with providing services that empower us to accomplish more in our respective missions and I encourage everyone to be sure to visit each vendor not just for the passport sticker but also to glean from their expertise. Specials thanks to our Platinum Sponsor: Preferred meals, our gold sponsor ServTracker by Accessible Solutions and our silver sponsors Bateman Community Living, and Citymeals on Wheels. We are glad to count among friends Lautman Maska Neill & Company, Golden Gourmet, Price Chopper, Temp-Tech, and Valley Foods.

I had the pleasure of working with amazing experts on our planning cmte and would like to recognize their efforts with a round of applause.

As I stated in my welcome letter please network at breakfast, lunch, and every break; soak up the speakers speeches, and be ready to inspire and be inspired. We all believe Older New Yorkers deserve the right to age in place with dignity and independence and with adequate community supports. We also all believe that a fully supported, funded, professional and engaged Aging Services network is best placed because of our shared expertise to ensure Older Adults in New York fully enjoy their later years.

Today and tomorrow at this conference we are all taking steps to ensure a new York that is truly age friendly and food secure.

Thank you.