

# Medical Nutrition Therapy Act

(H.R.3108 / S.1536)

## About Us

Representing more than 112,000 credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners, the **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. Many Academy members - registered dietitian nutritionists, nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered, and advanced-degree nutritionists - treat the Medicare population.

## The Cost of Chronic Conditions

According to the CDC, 90% of the nation's \$3.5 trillion annual health care expenditures is spent on treating chronic and mental health conditions.<sup>1,2</sup> Care for individuals with multiple chronic conditions is especially costly in the Medicare population (see figure).<sup>3</sup>

Many diet-related chronic conditions are contributing to poor COVID-19 outcomes. Minority populations have long faced chronic disease health disparities due to socioeconomic inequalities and reduced access to health care, healthy foods and safe places to be active. It is these same groups that are now disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The compounding impacts of systemic inequalities, food insecurity, reduced access to care and now COVID-19, underscore the need to provide equitable access to medical nutrition therapy in Medicare.

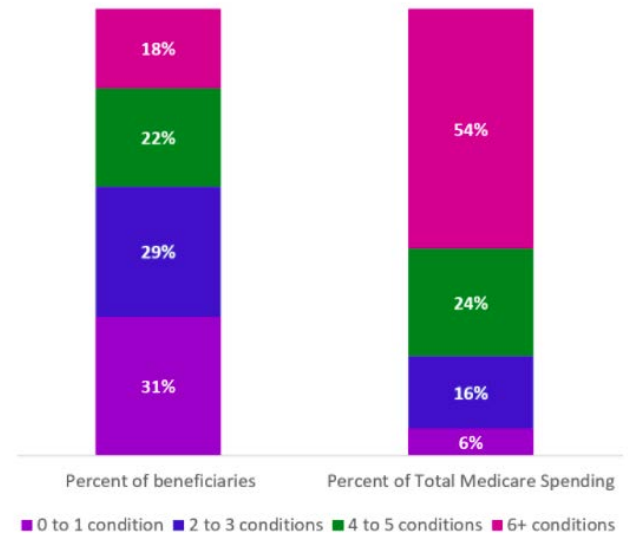
## Barriers to Care for Seniors

Currently, Medicare Part B only covers outpatient MNT for diabetes, renal disease and post-kidney transplant.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, qualified providers such as nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, clinical nurse specialists and psychologists are barred from directly referring their patients to MNT services.

## MNT is an Effective Solution

**MNT has been shown to be a cost-effective component of treatment for obesity, diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, HIV infection, unintended weight loss in older adults and other chronic conditions.**<sup>5-8</sup> Counseling provided by an RDN as part of a health care team can positively impact weight, blood pressure, blood lipids and blood sugar control.<sup>9,10</sup> In a national survey of primary care physicians, respondents reported believing that RDNs were the most qualified health care providers to assist patients with weight loss.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the National Lipid Association recommends nutritional counseling by RDNs to promote long-term adherence to an individualized, heart-healthy diet.<sup>12</sup>

## Medicare FFS Beneficiaries by Number of Chronic Conditions and Total Medicare Spending, 2018<sup>3</sup>



### What is an RDN?

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists are credentialed nutrition practitioners who have completed:

- An accredited bachelor's degree (or higher) in dietetics
- 1,200+ hours of supervised practice
- The national Registration Examination for Dietitians

To maintain the credential, RDNs must also secure 75+ hours of continuing education every five years.

### What is MNT?

Medical Nutrition Therapy is an evidence-based application of the Nutrition Care Process that can include nutrition assessment/reassessment, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention and nutrition monitoring and evaluation.

**The goal of MNT is to prevent, delay or manage disease and conditions.**

## What the MNT Act Does

This bill amends the Social Security Act to provide Medicare Part B coverage of outpatient MNT for **prediabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, malnutrition, eating disorders, cancer, gastrointestinal disease including celiac disease, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS** and any other disease or condition causing unintentional weight loss, with authority granted to the Secretary of Health to include other diseases based on medical necessity. It also authorizes nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists and psychologists to **refer their patients for MNT**.

## Co-sponsor the MNT Act

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics urges members of Congress to co-sponsor and support passage of the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act. The bill was introduced in the 117th U.S. Congress by U.S. Sens. Susan Collins (Maine) and Gary Peters (Mich.) and U.S. Reps. Robin Kelly (Ill.) and Fred Upton (Mich.).

### To become a co-sponsor, please contact:

Sen. Collins' office: Maria Olson ([Maria\\_Olson@aging.senate.gov](mailto:Maria_Olson@aging.senate.gov))

Sen. Peters' office: Darian Burrell-Clay ([Darian\\_Burrell-Clay@peters.senate.gov](mailto:Darian_Burrell-Clay@peters.senate.gov))

Rep. Kelly's office: Anita Burgos ([Anita.Burgos@mail.house.gov](mailto:Anita.Burgos@mail.house.gov))

Rep. Upton's office: Mark Ratner ([Mark.Ratner@mail.house.gov](mailto:Mark.Ratner@mail.house.gov))

### For more information from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, please contact:

Hannah Martin, MPH, RDN, Director, Legislative and Government Affairs ([hmartin@eatright.org](mailto:hmartin@eatright.org))

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