

**CEO'S REPORT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JULY 31, 2020**

### COVID-19 Update

As the impact of COVID-19 continues to unfold, Academy members and staff continue to be very productive developing resources for nutrition and dietetics practitioners to address preparedness, patient care, food safety and access. The information which follows supplements the update provided at the May Board meeting.

- Nine webinars have been presented and recorded for extended learning opportunities as part of the [Front Line](#) Series. All programs are supported through unrestricted educational grants by the Foundation. To date, we've had 11,232 live event participants representing 19 countries and over 90,000 views and climbing of the online recordings. The Series includes:
  - *Nutrition Assessments During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Panel Discussion*
  - *Providing Nutrition Services via Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic: What RDNs Need to Know*
  - *Providing Nutrition Services via Telehealth During the COVID-19 Pandemic: What RDNs Need to Know (Part 2)*
  - *Nutrition Support and COVID-19: What Clinicians Need to Know*
  - *Enteral Nutrition During Prone Position in the COVID-19 Patient*
  - *Local and Global Impacts of COVID-19 on Food Security Front-line Realities from Nutrition Professionals*
  - *Behind the Lines: Feeding the Future During COVID-19*
  - *Opportunities and Challenges in Providing School Meals in the Wake of COVID-19*
  - *Optimizing Nutrition for Preterm Infants During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

The Nutrition Services Coverage and Policy Initiative and Advocacy (PIA) teams continue to update and develop new resources to support members in navigating delivery and payment for MNT services delivered via telehealth during the COVID-19. Visit the [Coronavirus Professional Resources Hub](#) to access the extensive and ever-growing pool of information that demonstrates the value of the Academy to members and non-members.

The PIA team worked closely with other Academy units to provide members with the weekly Telehealth Office Hour series to answer questions related to providing medical nutrition therapy and other nutrition services via telehealth during COVID-19. The last installment of the Telehealth Office Hours series ended in June.

The Research, International and Scientific Affairs team has been working to address the current need for evidence related to COVID-19 in the work environment and to understand best nutrition care for patients with the virus while continuing to do research that started prior to the current pandemic.

- In July, the Academy released a [comprehensive guideline](#) to help RDNs address the needs of people with cystic fibrosis who are at risk of developing nutrition problems commonly associated with pulmonary disorders. The guideline, published in the *Journal*, is the first of its kind, addressing new medications and increased risk of obesity among some people with cystic fibrosis.
- To address the work environment, the Nutrition Research Network worked collaboratively with other Academy units to obtain IRB and to release and analyze three surveys focused on

food insecurity, hospital care and telehealth. The results of these surveys are being written into manuscripts and will be submitted by early fall.

- The Evidence Analysis Center has published two scoping reviews (Micronutrients and COVID and Probiotic Use and COVID) and a full narrative review focused on managing malnutrition in patients with COVID-19.
- The Data Science Center has an ongoing call to action for RDNs working in the hospital to document the care of their patient with COVID-19 into ANDHII. To date, we have over 106 patients with COVID-19, for a total of 217 visits and 88 of these patients have follow-up visits documented.
- Registry studies continue on the topics of breast-feeding, chronic kidney disease and oncology and a new registry study has just received IRB for patients with COVID-19 in the ICU.

### **Online Learning Efforts See Exponential Growth**

The Center for Lifelong Learning released Certificate of Training Modules on *Treatment of Gluten Disorders* and *Diabetes Mellitus* in the month of July in coordination with the Dietitians in Medical Nutrition Therapy DPG and the Diabetes DPG. Lifelong Learning staff is working closely with the National Kidney Foundation on the development of a multidisciplinary webinar series to be introduced in August on the new chronic kidney disease guidelines. In addition, the Live Webinar Series includes a collaboration with the American Physical Therapy Association.

The EatrightCPE learning management system (LMS) continues to meet and exceed engagement and user expectations by delivering over 600 educational programs. As of July 20, 2020, the LMS activity report indicates a total of 11,884 unique users in the system with an average of 578 users accessing the system daily. Total program enrollments are at 52,481, with 19,734 of those being completed successfully. Additionally, there are 14 DPGs and MIGs who have migrated their websites to the Higher Logic platform, which is now connected on single sign on with all Academy websites, including the LMS. Each of these DPG and MIG sites are now able to leverage both EatrightSTORE and EatrightCPE to connect educational products for their members.

### **Policy Initiatives and Advocacy**

- Food waste and sustainability are key policy initiative focus areas. We are championing two bipartisan bills that aim to address food loss and food waste in America: the School Food Recovery Act (H.R. 5607) and the Food Date Labeling Act (H.R. 3981).
- An Academy communication highlighted the need for the Food and Drug Administration to prioritize representation from traditionally underserved groups in clinical trials and also addressed the importance of prioritizing communication to health care providers regarding the current body of clinical evidence to help them make more informed, patient-centered care decisions where relevant evidence may be limited.
- The PIA team released the new Incident Reporting Tool, which was created to assist in its efforts to protect the public, enhance the quality of nutrition care and promote self-regulation of the profession. The information collected from the Incident Reporting Tool will be used to facilitate stakeholders and policymakers' understanding of the value of qualified RDN care, including elected leaders, state agency officials, other health care providers and the public.
- The Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2020 was introduced by U.S. Reps. Eliot Engel (N.Y.) and Pete King (N.Y.). This bill expands MNT coverage in Medicare Part B for prediabetes, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, malnutrition, eating disorders, cancer, celiac disease, HIV/AIDS and any disease related to unintentional weight loss. The

introduction of this bill was shared with all Academy members via email, in a press release, across Academy social media channels as well as *Eat Right Weekly* and *Public Policy Weekly News*. In addition, the PIA team launched an action alert on this important piece of legislation, asking Academy members to urge their representatives for support.

## Accreditation

- 2022 Standards
  - The 2017 Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinated Programs (CP), Didactic Programs (DPD), Internship Programs (DI), Technician Programs (DT) and Foreign (FDE) and International (IDE) Dietitian Education Programs are scheduled for revision.
  - The ACEND standards committee is reviewing comments that will inform the revisions of these Standards. Several required elements were added to the new standards to address diversity, equity and inclusion in ACEND-accredited programs.
- Future Education Model Standards
  - ACEND issued an invitation to programs interested in being accredited under the Future Education Model Standards to apply to be early adopter demonstration programs. The call for applications for the fifth cohort of programs has been issued. The application forms and a webinar with suggested tips for completing the application can be found at [www.eatrightpro.org/FutureModel](http://www.eatrightpro.org/FutureModel).
  - ACEND has 28 programs (25 graduate and three bachelor) that have been accredited under the Future Education Model Standards and 59 programs in process.
- Diversity in ACEND-Accredited Programs
 

2019 data on the diversity of students and interns enrolled in ACEND-accredited programs reveal:

  - The proportion of underrepresented minorities in bachelor's-level CP (24 percent) is the same as the proportion in master's-level CP (24 percent)
  - The proportion of underrepresented minorities in master's-level DPDs and DIs is lower than bachelor's DPDs and non-degree DIs
  - DPDs enroll a diverse body of students compared to CPs and DIs: Underrepresented minorities represent 33 percent of students enrolled in BS/DPDs and 24 percent in MS/DPDs.
  - The proportion of underrepresented minorities enrolled in DIs is low compared to other ACEND-accredited programs: Underrepresented minorities represent 24 percent of students enrolled in non-degree DIs (9 percent lower than BS/DPD) and 16 percent of students enrolled in MS/DIs (8 percent lower than MS/CPs and MS/DPDs).
  - The proportion of Hispanics declines sharply at the master's level: as much as 10 percent lower in MS/CPs compared to BS/CPs. The percent of Blacks stays about the same, but generally is low: about 5 percent.

## Credentialing

- As of July 20 there are 105,466 RDNs; 5,033 NDTRs; 4,532 board-certified specialists; and 73 registered advanced practice RDNs.
- CPE Credit Update
 

During its June meeting, CDR made the following motions regarding continuing professional education credit:

  - Virtual Exhibits CPE Credit
 

*Move to expand the maximum CPEUs for virtual exhibits to align with current PDP guidelines of 15 CPEUs for RDNs and 10 CPEUs for NDTRs in a five-year cycle.*

- Virtual Poster Sessions CPE Credit  
*Move to include e-poster sessions with the same standards outlined in the PDP Guide as live poster sessions under activity type 180: Posters*
  - CPE Credit Hour Modification  
*Move to modify CDR's 0.5 (1/2-hour unit) credit system to accommodate 0.25 (1/4-hour) credits.*
  - Rationale  
*This expansion will allow CDR-credentialed practitioners to report CPE credits obtained through participation in interprofessional continuing professional education programs in 0.25 increments.*
- The Certificate of Training in Obesity in Pediatrics and Adults will transition to a virtual format for the 2021 program year. Programs are planned for November 2020, January 2021, March 2021 and May 2021. Specific dates will follow.

### Joint Accreditation Collaboration

CDR is moving forward to become a member of the Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education, a collaboration of the following organizations:

- Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education
- Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American Dental Association's Continuing Education Recognition Program
- American Nurses Credentialing Center
- American Psychological Association
- Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry's Council on Optometric Practitioner Education
- Association of State Social Work Boards.

With the discontinuance of CDR's Program Provider Accreditation process in 2024, CDR's Joint Accreditation Associate Membership provides CDR accredited providers with another accreditation option - it provides CDR credentialed practitioners with expanded high quality CPE opportunities and enhances CDR's credibility with other accrediting bodies. Prior approval of individual activities remains an option for those CDR Accredited Providers who do not wish to become jointly accredited. Prior approval offers CDR greater quality control over CPE since each activity must be submitted for review. This will address some of the concerns CDR has had regarding program content and CPE hour inflation. More information about Joint Accreditation is available at the following website. <https://www.jointaccreditation.org/glance>

### **Academy Efforts with Nutrition Care for Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease**

We continue to collaborate with the National Kidney Foundation to increase utilization of MNT services for patients with non-dialysis-dependent chronic kidney disease. In the spring, we completed a survey of medical providers, RDNs and patients designed to better understand factors that help patients with chronic kidney disease access medical nutrition therapy. Dissemination of the survey findings continues with both an educational session and poster planned for FNCE®. A manuscript was submitted to *Kidney Medicine*. In collaboration with the Academy, the Foundation began a new project in 2019 titled the State of Food and Nutrition Series: The Impact of RDNs on Non-Communicable Diseases which demonstrates the value of access to nutrition care by RDNs in three high-priority non-communicable diseases, including chronic kidney disease.

## **Nutrition Research**

The Research, International and Scientific Affairs staff have submitted a manuscript to the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* on the results of the Academy's first registry study looking at congruence with the Prevention of the Diabetes Mellitus guidelines and related outcomes; a consensus paper to the Academy's *Journal* on Effect of Incorporating Genetic Testing into Nutrition Care, in combination with two systematic reviews related to genetic testing; and a full narrative paper on implementation science describing this newly emerging field along with two scoping reviews on retail nutrition and weight management in adults.

## **Addressing Audits of Malnutrition Payments to Hospitals**

Hospitals across the country continue to be audited by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service contractors, resulting in some being denied reimbursement for malnutrition as a major complicating condition. In several of these instances, the contracted reviewers used outdated methods for assessing severe malnutrition (e.g., serum proteins). In addition, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) included in its active work plan for 2018 "a review of hospitals billing for severe malnutrition." The OIG has stated: "This review will assess the accuracy of Medicare payments for the treatment of severe malnutrition." This raises significant concern for many U.S. hospitals that are focused on improving malnutrition diagnosis, documentation and intervention in their facilities.

Academy representation is included on an American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN), a task force charged with developing a strategy to educate the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, OIG and CMS on best practices for diagnosing, documenting and coding severe malnutrition. This work builds on previous collaborative efforts between the Academy and ASPEN on outreach and education of public and private payers on the use of appropriate criteria for identifying malnutrition. As Academy members continue to position themselves as leaders in addressing malnutrition, denials by some private payers are also being noted. While CMS audits are suspended due to COVID-19, the Academy and ASPEN staff, continue to be in communication with staff from CMS' Center for Program Integrity to not lose sight of this issue, which is even more important due to the association between malnutrition and COVID-19. Academy and ASPEN publications on the topic are being shared with CMS as they become available.

## **Resources to Support Members as Experts**

The Nutrition Services Coverage team in collaboration with the Marketing team launched the Power of Payment program (recently rebranded from "Payment Matters"). The program is aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness throughout the nutrition and dietetics profession of the importance of proving and showcasing value and return on investment of RDN services. It focuses on all members, not just those who bill for services, leveraging the new Higher Logic email platform with messages tailored to specific target audiences within this total membership. Enrollment is over 8,500 members and growing. The program was designed based on needs identified through the series of surveys conducted by the Nutrition Services Payment Committee of RDNs related to coding practices and coverage by public and private payers for MNT services.

## **FY21 Program of Work Highlights**

Some FY21 program of work highlights follow.

- Hold Diversity and Inclusion Committee Listening Sessions, approve and implement action plan
- With the Foundation, pursue Diversity and Inclusion Fellow opportunity
- Host the Second Annual Nutrition and Health Equity Summit in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust

- Review Strategic Plan for relevance and make modifications, where appropriate
- Continue governance assessment and redesign efforts
- Respond to 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee’s Scientific Report and communicate/incorporate final 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines
- Incorporate Board-approved Public Policy Priorities into Strategic Plan
- Incorporate Board-approved Research Priorities into Strategic Plan
- Finalize and provide results of Nutrition in Evolving Healthcare Task Force Report to inform strategic planning
- Implement Advocacy Roadmap Strategy
- Develop Licensure and Regulations Compact
- Transition Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ 2020 to global virtual event
- Implement new Leadership Institute
- Expand COVID-19 Professional Resource Hub
- Grow Alliance Program collaborations to advance the Strategic Plan
- Develop new membership recruitment and retention targeted promotions
- Launch Compensation and Benefits Survey in March 2021
- Implement Board-approved Global Business Development Operations Plan
- Rebrand ANDHII to strengthen user experience and impact
- Conduct registry studies on practice patterns/outcomes in the areas of lactation and nutrition support in patients with COVID-19
- Use the results of the *State of Food and Nutrition Series: The Impact of RDNs on Non-communicable Diseases* to demonstrate the value of access to nutrition care by RDNs
- Identify and create virtual industry support options
- Develop Code of Ethics educational resources
- Continue development of Quality Strategies/Quality Improvement tools and measures
- Transition Nutrition Care Process/Nutrition Focused Physical Exam to a virtual training program
- Develop and support Self-study and Certificate of Training Programs for students
- Launch new publications
- Increase digital access and expand electronic publications and products
- Grow the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* Impact Factor
- Develop and launch new DPG/MIG websites on the Higher Logic platform
- Integrate the Learning Management System across all Academy platforms
- Enhance and upgrade the Academy’s Association Management System
- Upgrade and expand the IT Network Infrastructure
- Benchmark and implement new Human Resources evaluation system for staff
- Assess staffing reorganization efforts to meet current and future business needs
- Implement an office re-entry COVID-19 Safety Plan

**SUBMITTED BY:** Patricia M. Babjak