
**CEO'S REPORT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

**eat
right.** Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

The following are activity highlights since our October meeting.

Academy Wins Two MarCom Awards

The annual MarCom Awards are an international competition that honors excellence in marketing and communications. For 2020, the Academy received a [Platinum award](#) for the Professional Resource Hub devoted to coronavirus resources and information for [health professionals](#) and for [consumers](#). *Food & Nutrition Magazine* received a [Platinum award](#) for the online [“Diverse Voices in Dietetics” column](#).

Policy Priorities Update

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and Chronic Disease Issue Brief Released

Diversity and health equity have been key considerations in the Academy's policy and advocacy efforts over the past several years. During this time, an assessment was made that a foundational document was needed to frame the current environment, define the opportunities for policy change and to inform advocacy strategy. The [Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and Chronic Disease issue brief](#) examines these inequities and how they contribute to racial disparities in chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, some cancers and obesity.

In developing the brief, the Academy recognized it is essential to address the root causes of health inequities by examining the social determinants of health that play a role in the etiology and amplification of chronic health disparities. These root causes of health disparities that must be addressed to achieve health equity are outlined in the document which will be used to support the policy and advocacy work of the Academy across each of the impact areas of the strategic plan.

In collaboration with the Strategic Communications team, the brief features input from stakeholders including several board members as well as the leadership and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Health Equity and Diversity advocacy group, member interest groups, subject matter experts and Academy staff across organizational units. It was approved by the Academy's Legislative and Public Policy Committee. A dissemination plan has been developed that will include a communication to Academy committees, affiliates, dietetic practice and member interest groups and members through established channels. In addition, the House of Delegates will receive the document to support a policy and advocacy training scheduled for later this week that builds on HOD's fall dialogue related to health equity.

Liz Campbell, Senior Director of Legislative and Government Affairs, was the visionary for the project which was supported by a talented group of dietetic interns over the past 12 months. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for opportunities to highlight our advocacy and to extend its use in other areas.

COVID-19 Relief Efforts to Address Food Insecurity and Health Disparities

The Academy has been committed since spring 2020 to COVID-19 relief efforts to address food insecurity and health disparities. In October, the Academy sent more than 3,000 letters from member advocates to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, calling for the extension of child nutrition program flexibilities through the end of the school year; the agency later announced that these waivers would be

extended for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, ensuring access to free, nutritious meals. Thanks to the ongoing advocacy work of Academy members, many of these policy priorities were included in the bipartisan, bicameral Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act, which was signed into law in December.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* were released December 29. The Academy was closely engaged in each stage of the three-year process for developing these guidelines and commends the evidence-based recommendations but noted opportunities for future iterations.

Treat and Reduce Obesity Act

Thanks to the efforts of Academy staff, provisions from the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act were included in the omnibus legislation which was signed into law on December 22. Its inclusion was a direct result of the bipartisan relationships developed through nearly a decade of leadership and advocacy by the Academy on the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act. With support from Congress, the Academy plans to formally renew our request to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to recognize RDNs as evidence-based providers of intensive behavioral therapy for obesity and allow independent billing for the service.

Transition Strategy for Biden Administration

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for and importance of strong nutrition policies, from access to quality health care to sustainable food systems. At the end of 2020, the Academy sent the Biden-Harris transition team a memo outlining our policy priorities for 2021 and beyond. The Academy is poised to work with the Biden-Harris Administration on critical nutrition priorities.

Approved by the Legislative Public Policy Committee, the memo outlined:

1. The need to prioritize COVID-19 relief efforts, including:
 - Adequate access to nutrition care in Medicare
 - Strengthen and expand the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to address food insecurity
 - Ensure that school nutrition and child care programs receive emergency relief funds
 - Diversify allied health professions, including dietetics, to provide culturally appropriate care to communities of color
 - Equitable access to health care for individuals with obesity
 - Rescind rules that limit access to federal health care and nutrition programs
 - Support swift implementation of program flexibilities for SNAP, school meals, WIC and senior nutrition programs
 - Rescind any school nutrition standards proposed rule changes that do not move toward alignment with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
 - Ensure immigrant children and adolescents in the custody of any federal agency receive an adequate supply of healthful and safe foods that promote optimal physical, cognitive and social growth and development, as well as ensure that breast-fed infants have continuing access to their mother's milk.
2. Academy Priorities for First 100 Days of Biden-Harris Administration and 117th U.S. Congress:
 - Support efforts to advance racial equity and economic recovery priorities
 - Prioritize job development opportunities that meet the health care needs of the public
 - Support efforts that address climate change.

Appropriations Advocacy

The PIA team has started planning for FY 2022 appropriations advocacy efforts. The Academy will advocate for funding during the appropriations process for federal programs that help people live a healthy life as well as funding to support implementation of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. To make the most impact, the Academy will share a communications toolkit with policy leaders to help them communicate these priorities with their members of Congress once the president's budget is released in early 2021.

Nutrition Research Network Update

Activities from October to December include:

- Results from “Patient and Provider Perspectives on Access to Medical Nutrition Therapy for Patients with Non-Dialysis Dependent Chronic Kidney Disease” study were featured on Jim Myers’ (CKD patient advocate) podcast in December, with more than 2,000 views as of mid-day the next day and was the largest number of views he has ever had for his broadcast.
- Six manuscripts from NRN studies were submitted to journals in November and December 2020:
 - Validation of a Novel Nutrition Informatics Tool to Assess Agreement between Documented Nutrition Care and Evidence-Based Recommendations (*JAND*)
 - The Saqmolo’ Project: Rationale and Study Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial Examining the Impact of Daily Complementary Feeding of Eggs on Infant Development and Growth in Guatemala (*JAND*)
 - Rationale and protocol for a study to validate the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition consensus-derived diagnostic indicators for adult and pediatric malnutrition and to determine optimal registered dietitian nutritionist staffing in acute-care hospital settings (*JAND*)
 - A home garden intervention improves child length-for-age z-score and household-level crop count and nutritional functional diversity in rural Guatemala (*JAND*)
 - Evaluating the Implementation of Evidence-Based Kidney Nutrition Practice Guidelines: The AUGmeNt Study Protocol (*Journal of Renal Nutrition*)
 - Mapping Nutrition Interventions in Guatemala: Identifying Opportunities to Improve Coverage and Coordination (*Food and Nutrition Bulletin*)
- First virtual bioelectrical impedance analysis trainings for MCC study hosted in December
- AUGmeNt study baseline RDN study trainings launched in December
- Second wave of COVID-19 surveys disseminated in December
- “Medical Nutrition Therapy Access in CKD: a Cross-sectional Survey of Patients and Providers” manuscript published in *Kidney Medicine* in November
- Abstracts for MCC study (pediatric malnutrition) and Feeding America Point of Service Nutrition Education project accepted for oral presentation at the virtual 2021 Western Medical Research Conference
- Content from the Saqmolo’ study (session), Evaluating a Family-Based Nutrition and Garden Intervention in Rural Guatemala Pilot Study (session), Patient and Provider Perspectives on Access to Medical Nutrition Therapy for Patients with Non-Dialysis Dependent Chronic Kidney Disease (session and poster) and the AUGmeNt study (poster) presented at FNCE
- Public Health/Community Nutrition DPG hosted a live Q&A session for the FNCE session on the Saqmolo’ study and the Evaluating a Family-Based Nutrition and Garden Intervention in Rural Guatemala Pilot Study

- Sixth and final study site launched for Effects of Nutrition Care on Oncology Outcomes Pilot Study in October.

North American Systematic Review Methods' Virtual Research Day

Former Academy President Mary Russell spoke on October 30 at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Evidence-based Practice Center's North American Systematic Review Methods Virtual Research Day. She presented on "Examining Effect of Nutrition Interventions to Reduce Hyperphosphatemia in Chronic Kidney Disease: Is Including Non-Randomized Trials a Waste of Time?"

Record-Setting (and Breaking) FNCE® 2020

Shifting FNCE® from face-to-face to virtual was filled with unknowns — from how many people may choose to attend during an era of virtual fatigue to leveraging how to boost engagement in a virtual space. We relied heavily on the expertise of the Academy's staff as well as vendors who quickly adapted their own professional skills to include digital event design and engagement offering a truly immersive live virtual event.

FNCE® 2020 set record breaking attendance numbers and generated interest worldwide with 13,775 attendees from 66 countries and territories joining the first virtual event. FNCE® offered 100 educational sessions providing in-depth discussions on trending topics and 350 posters displaying the latest research in nutrition and dietetics. All of this was done using a virtual platform that was different from any other technology used to date in our profession.

As we move into another year of the global pandemic, we remain committed to gathering when it becomes safe for everyone. For 2021, this means another opportunity to gather virtually, from October 16 to 19. We are excited to innovate, educate, celebrate our accomplishments and challenge each other as we move forward in a "new normal" of a virtual environment. Everything members liked about FNCE® 2020 will return in October with enhancements for this year.

Call for FNCE® Sessions

The FNCE® 2021 Call for Sessions was redesigned by the Committee for Lifelong Learning to increase transparency regarding the review process and to ensure each proposal is graded on both quantitative and qualitative measures. This new review method provides a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration attributes such as: quality of evidence, diverse and inclusive perspectives and actionable learning.

FNCE® On-Demand

FNCE® On-Demand is now for sale for individuals who were unable to attend the conference. New to this year - FNCE® sessions are available as both individual sessions or as collections curated by topic.

COVID-19 Front Line Webinar Series

We continued to provide essential practice information to RDNs and NDTRs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten webinars have been presented and recorded for extended learning opportunities as part of the [Front Line Series](#). The Front Line Series will continue with a webinar addressing COVID-19 in long-term care settings and its impact on the delivery of nutrition care. To date, we have reached over 89,000 views on the live and recorded webinars.

Certificates of Training

The Center for Lifelong Learning is assessing the Academy's Certificate of Training programs to evaluate content, delivery and design. In the coming months, the CLL will present a plan for scope of programming and a long-term strategy.

NFPE Malnutrition Clinical Characteristics (MCC) Study

The Nutrition Focused Physical Exam Workshops have been able to continue to support the MCC Validation Study for both the adult and pediatric populations. Program participants are moving forward with data collection per their facility's guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Management System

The eatrightCPE learning management system continues to meet and exceed engagement and user expectations by delivering more than 600 educational programs whenever and wherever RDNs and NDTRs need education and training. As of December 31, the total program enrollments were 86,144, a 64% increase since July 2020, with 19,143 total unique learners.

Leadership Institute

In 2019, the Board made the decision to relaunch the Leadership Institute (LI). The new LI is a comprehensive professional development program designed to help current and future leaders in nutrition, health and wellness develop leadership, communication and career development skills ranging from executive presence, strategic planning and team building. Through a combination of self-directed study, in-person trainings, networking opportunities, small group projects and virtual learning, participants gain hands-on experience in becoming more effective leaders as well as earn over 50 CPEUs.

The 2020-2021 Leadership Institute involves 93 participants, including individual applicants and members nominated by DPGs, MIGs, affiliates, corporate partners, and the Foundation. The LI program to date has been comprised of FNCE® 2020; two Certificates of Training ("Developing Your Role as Leader" (Level 1) and "Advancing Your Role as Leader" (Level 2)); leadership profile self-assessment; and a live virtual program with keynotes from three high-level speakers. Currently, LI participants are participating in a keynote book club series and cohort projects with their cohort groups and advisors. This summer, the LI participants will reconvene as a full group for a final virtual program including a plenary session and presentation of final cohort projects via the platform Bizzabo with a virtual facilitator. Additionally, this cohort will also receive registration to FNCE® 2021 and 2022 as well as roundtrip airfare to FNCE® 2022 and two nights' hotel stay.

Although this LI cohort group has been unable to meet in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire program has been adapted to be delivered virtually through a variety of high-quality platforms. LI participants have positively received these shifts and have embraced the virtual opportunities, adapting well to this format. Feedback from LI participants has been overwhelmingly positive. More details will be provided at the February 25 Board meeting.

Healthy and Sustainable Agriculture Survey

The Academy launched a survey on Healthy and Sustainable Agriculture that was sent in July 2020 to all Academy members via email and digital channels, with more than 2,000 respondents. The Academy will share the findings with key departments involved with content development (education, publications, web resources) including dietetic practice groups, member interest groups, Lifelong Learning and Engagement, Research, Publications and Online Resources and the Creative Media

teams. In addition, the information will be shared with the Policy, Initiatives and Advocacy group for legislative opportunities.

Renal Nutrition Programs: EAC Scoping Review

The Evidence Analysis Center's [Retail Nutrition Programs and Outcomes: An Evidence Analysis Center Scoping Review](#) was released as an article in press in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. This important article is the result of the hard work of the Nutrition in Food Retail Program Development Fellow and RDN member Allison Yoder, and was one of the key deliverables from the first year of her fellowship.

Health Professions Faculty of the Future

The Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education (IHPE Forum) is an ongoing, convening activity of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that brings together diverse stakeholders to network, discuss and illuminate issues for the benefit and promotion of health professional education. Currently, there are 37 member-sponsors of the Forum who are academic experts and health professionals representing 17 different disciplines from multiple developed and developing countries. The Academy has been a member of the Forum since its inception in 2012. RDNs Kathryn Kolasa and Kathrin Eliot are the Academy's representatives.

In August 2020 the Global Forum held a workshop titled Health Professions Faculty for the Future. At the workshop, presenters provided examples of how educators are using effective teaching strategies and of practices in health professional education. The proceedings of the workshop summarizing the presentation and discussion of the workshop can be viewed [here](#).

'I Want That Job': Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Academy RDN member and former Spokesperson Vandana Sheth, promoted the nutrition and dietetics profession in a [video podcast](#) featured on [WorkingNation.com](#), a nonprofit campaign that illuminates solutions to the unemployment crisis.

Academy Member Speaks at Improving Community Health Webinar

Academy Spokesperson and RDN member Kristen Gradney spoke December 15 in an online webinar titled "Improving Community Health and Understanding the Importance of Nutrition," sponsored by Hadas Yariv, a health, nutrition and corporate responsibility company based in Israel, and Chicago's Urban Transformation Network. Other speakers included U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly (Ill.) and a representative of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Keynote Address: Philippines Nutritionist Dietitians Association

I was honored to be the keynote speaker at the Nutritionist Dietitians Association of the Philippines' February first-ever virtual meeting in February. I focused on the Academy's international leadership, particularly in the areas of food and nutrition using a science and evidence-based approach and creating leaders in the global nutrition community. I also shared our commitment to help solve the greatest food and nutrition challenges through the transformational power of nutrition.

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