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**CEO'S REPORT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OCTOBER 2, 2020**

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The following are activity highlights since the BOD July meeting.

**Academy Presentation on Racial Disparities at the National Baptist Convention (NBC)**

We are grateful to our health equity consultant, Richard Boykin, who worked closely with us to organize the Academy's Second Annual Nutrition and Health Equity Summit on August 25. Through Richard's introduction to Summit presenter Reverend Dr. Jerry Young, President of the National Baptist Convention (NBC) USA, we were invited to speak on September 15 at the virtual NBC 2020 annual meeting. Academy member and RDN Kristen Gradney presented a general session titled, *Racial Disparities and COVID-19: The link to nutrition*. Other presenters at the convention included Kamala Harris and Derrick Johnson, President & CEO of NAACP. This is an initial outcome of this year's Summit and leads to other exciting opportunities with the NBC, which Richard through his Building Bridges consulting firm is facilitating. We are updating the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and will share the information with members.

**HHS Call: Racial and Ethnic Minority Health Advocates and Providers**

Academy members and RDNs, Kristen Gradney and Jeanne Blankenship represented the Academy on an August 27 monthly call for external groups, hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to discuss racial and ethnic minority health. The call focused on COVID-19, including vaccine development and clinical trials.

**House Education and Labor Committee Virtual Hill Briefing**

The Academy and its members have been working diligently to support school nutrition members during the COVID-19 pandemic. A school reopening brief was released in early August, calling for several items, including the extension of critical nationwide waivers to allow schools the flexibility to serve children this school year. The Academy has also supported bills such as the Feed the Children Act, which calls for emergency relief funds for school nutrition programs.

On Wednesday, September 23, Academy member and RDN, Angela Richey, presented in front of the House Education and Labor Committee in a closed-door briefing to educate legislators on the state of school nutrition across the country. She described how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted her district and called for Congress to help secure waiver extensions and emergency relief funding. The recording of the briefing can be viewed [here](#).

**Newly Published Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guidelines**

**2020 Kidney Disease Quality Initiative Clinical Practice Guidelines**

The National Kidney Foundation, in collaboration with the Academy, released the [2020 Kidney Disease Quality Initiative Clinical Practice Guidelines on Nutrition in Chronic Kidney Disease](#).

These are an update of a previous version and have been expanded to include nutritional management of patients with stages 1-5 chronic kidney disease and patients with a functioning transplant. The KDOQI guidelines address six primary areas:

- Nutritional Assessment
- Medical Nutrition Therapy
- Dietary Protein and Energy Intake
- Nutritional Supplementation
- Micronutrients
- Electrolytes

### **Very Low Birthweight Guideline**

The Evidence Analysis Center published the [Very Low Birthweight Preterm Infant Enteral Nutrition Evidence-Based Nutrition Practice Guideline](#). We are grateful to the expert workgroup and members of the project team for the guidelines and recommendations on:

- Protein Amount
- Type of Fat
- Human Milk Fortification
- Formula Enrichment
- Mother's Milk
- Human Milk (Mother's and Donor)
- Mother's Milk Supplementation

### **NCP Veterans Health Study**

Nutrition and dietetics professionals have been waiting for evidence to support using the Nutrition Care Process. A [recent publication](#) from the Academy evaluated all NCP components and their impact on nutrition outcomes and found that high quality NCP documentation and frequent RDN visits with an emphasis on etiology-driven intervention were predictive of positive nutrition outcomes. The foundation of the NCP established by the Academy focused on methods to systematically resolve nutrition problems by applying six clinical judgments when providing nutrition care. By having standardized terms used across all settings, RDNs may collect data on the care provided and measure whether this care is impacting health outcomes. The results of this study that utilized data generated by the NCP terminology found that all the critical thinking steps of the NCP were important in improving nutrition care outcomes and also that an etiology driven intervention is the strongest predictor for a positive outcome.

### **Building Global Nutrition Policies**

A new *Journal* article discusses the [2019 Global Nutrition Research and Policy Forum](#), which included nutrition and dietetics practitioners and other health care professionals from Canada, Colombia, Italy, Poland, Singapore, the U.S. and Venezuela. The forum's goal was to explore research that would inform country- and global-level policy efforts to improve health outcomes. This project demonstrated global leadership by the Academy and sparked major discussions regarding nutrition research (specific to malnutrition) and policy. This forum could potentially be expanded and repeated and lead to future collaborations with other global leaders.

### **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 denied reimbursement for malnutrition as a major complicating condition. In several of these instances, the contracted reviewers used outdated methods for assessing severe malnutrition (for example, serum proteins). In addition, the Office of the Inspector General in the Department of Health and Human Services 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.

On July 13, the Office of the OIG released a report of its findings from an audit of FY16 and FY17 hospital inpatient claims to determine whether hospitals complied with Medicare billing requirements when assigning severe malnutrition diagnosis codes. The OIG found that 173 of 200 claims reviewed did not correctly bill Medicare for severe malnutrition diagnosis codes (E41 and

E43), resulting in estimated overpayments of \$1 billion. The Academy collaborated with American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, the American Society for Nutrition and the Association of Clinical Documentation Integrity Specialists to issue a [joint statement](#) in response to the OIG report.

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

The Nutrition Services Coverage team released an updated version of its popular toolkit, [RDNs' Complete Guide to Credentialing and Billing: The Private Payer Market](#). This toolkit empowers RDNs to enter the Private Payer Market through step-by-step directions on how to become a provider and bill for services. Updates include the most current set of CPT<sup>®</sup> codes and expanded additional information on verifying benefits and complying with legal requirements for billing.

### **Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics Update**

The International Dietitian Education (IDE) Programs Accreditation Standards have been revised to remove the 900 hours of supervised practice in the US for IDE programs, effective September 14, 2020. The decrease in DPD students coupled with the increase in internship slots for students has resulted in an increased Spring 2020 match rate. Including pre-selected students, the rate was 71% and after second round the placement rate was 81%. The match potential, if all internship slots were filled this spring, would be 95.3%.

As of September 14, 2020, the ACEND Board lifted the moratorium on new eligibility applications for accreditation from DPD programs.

### **Lifelong Learning and Professional Engagement Update**

The 2019-2020 Committee for Lifelong Learning (CLL) has worked diligently with Academy Lifelong Learning and Engagement staff to transition the educational program from live to virtual. In addition to reformulating the session format and timing to meet the new virtual parameters, the CLL has also developed virtual learning lounges and speaker chat rooms to enhance member engagement during the meeting. The CLL served as expert reviewers and co-developers of the new FNCE<sup>®</sup> 2021 Call for Sessions site which launched on September 1. All proposals are due by November 18, 2020 in order to be considered for the 2021 program. For full call for session details and proposal criteria, visit <https://eatrightfnce.org/program/present-fnce/>

The Lifelong Learning and Professional Engagement team Center for Lifelong Learning continues to grow engagement opportunities with member and nonmembers through DPGs, MIGs and affiliates, Academy alliances, and over 400 programs offered during the course of the year. Some of the most recent efforts include:

- Learning Management System (LMS) at [www.eatrightcpe.org](http://www.eatrightcpe.org) which now integrates with all DPG and MIG websites hosted on the Higher Logic platform through single sign on capabilities. The average daily usage of the site is 574 unique users with over 13,150 members active in the LMS.
- Front Line Webinar Series (COVID-19) continues to be managed and hosted by lifelong learning staff. The webinar series was offered for free to members and non-members through the generosity of the Academy Foundation and unrestricted educational grants from a variety of partners. Active participation for the live events is at 11,960 individuals and post event views is at 107,081 from 28 countries to date.

- Ongoing hosting and management support for large-scale Academy events including the Health Equity Summit and the National Malnutrition Month.
- Additional live and sustained learning activities are ongoing as hosted through the center. Some of the most recent programs include the monthly live webinar series at <https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/professional-development/distance-learning/webinar-series> and the certificate of training programs at <https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/professional-development/distance-learning/online-learning>.

### **Academy Honors and Awards at FNCE® 2020**

Please be sure to review the prerecorded acceptance remarks of this year's honors and awards recipients at the virtual honors display located in the main FNCE® lobby.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Patricia M. Babjak