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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
FEBRUARY 21-22, 2019**

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Activity highlights since our September meeting follow.

**United Nations: International Day of Women and Girls in Science Forum**

I had the honor of representing the Academy February 12 at the International Day of Women and Girls in Science Forum, held at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The panel's topic was "Investing in Science and Technology Education for Shaping Society's Future." This was the third year the Academy has been invited to participate in this event, which draws representatives from over 39 countries including the USA, Canada, Turkey, Iran, Norway, Lebanon, Poland, Pakistan and Kenya. The panel was moderated by Her Excellency, Ambassador Katalin Annamaria Bogay, the permanent representative of Hungary to the United Nations, and included representation from the Economic Affairs office of the UN, a social innovation consultant from Denmark, the founder of the Science Communication Project of Kenya as well as a Syrian refugee who established a science foundation to support women. Proud to represent an organization that values the contribution of women in science, I focused my comments on our contribution to fighting malnutrition which has applications beyond our own borders. Noting that scientific research informs all our work as nutrition and dietetics professionals, I said: "Conclusions from solid nutrition research provide us with information that improves patient safety and reduces hospital readmissions – leading to better, more effective care and a healthier population." Referring to the Academy's Malnutrition Quality Improvement Initiative, I added: "This is but one example of how application of nutrition science leads to healthier people and a healthier society." The video recording of the presentation can be viewed [here](#).

**Continued Collaboration with Special Olympics**

The Academy's collaboration with Special Olympics is an important part of furthering our Diversity and Inclusion efforts. Terri Raymond represented the Academy in Seattle last July at the Special Olympics World Games. The Academy was recently awarded the 2019 Inclusive Health Innovation Grant by Special Olympics International to develop a certificate of training for inclusive health. This project will provide an opportunity to educate Academy members, non-members, students and other professionals in the nutrition assessment, education and delivery of services to people with disabilities. Jeanne Blankenship participated in the Inclusive Health Systems planning and implementation grantee workshop in February 13 in Washington, D.C. The workshop brought together existing and future champions of inclusive health to share best practices and lessons learned as well as ideas for new initiatives in the inclusive health systems space.

**Title IX Amendments: American Academy for the Advancement of Science**

The Academy continues our longstanding alliance relationship with the American Academy for the Advancement of Science with Chief Science Officer Alison Stieber as our representative. The Academy recently signed on to a letter of comment, prepared by the American Educational Research Association and AAAS, regarding [Proposed Amendments to Title IX Implementing Regulations for the U.S. Department of Education](#). The letter urges the proposed rule changes

should not be made final, noting that there is strong scientific basis for a concern that the proposed amendments to Title IX regulations “do not reflect the extant research and data on the nature and extent of harm caused by sexual harassment in educational programs.” The Academy participated in the 2019 [AAAS Annual Meeting](#) on February 14-17 in Washington, D.C.

### **Collaboration with United States Breastfeeding Committee**

As part of our collaboration with the United States Breastfeeding Committee, the Academy, along with A Better Balance, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Nurses Association, the Center for WorkLife Law, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners co-hosted a February 11 webinar titled "Breastfeeding Works: Legal Protections for Lactating Employees and Students in the Health Care Industry". The webinar, targeted to health care workers who are pregnant or breast-feeding, provided tools and information from expert panelists regarding national and state laws that protect parents from discrimination and laws that require lactation accommodations at work and school. Jeanne Blankenship serves as the Academy's alliance representative on the committee.

### **Secondary Fracture Prevention Initiative**

The Academy offered its support in September 2018 for the Clinical Recommendations of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research Secondary Fracture Prevention Initiative Coalition, of which the Academy is a member. Academy member and RDN, Karen Chapman-Novakofski, is our representative to the coalition. In its [recommendations](#), the coalition – of the world's top bone health experts, physicians, specialists and patient advocacy groups – made clinical recommendations to tackle the public health crisis in the treatment of osteoporosis and the debilitating and often deadly hip and spine fractures caused by the disease.

### **Quality Management and Malnutrition Initiative**

#### *MQii Composite Measure*

The malnutrition composite measure received considerable support from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) team. However, CMS chose not to include the malnutrition composite measure in the 2018 Measures Under Consideration (MUC) list for inclusion in the IQR. The feedback received was that the administration opposes the addition of any new measures that are not outcome measures. Also, non-CMS agencies, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) did not authorize the composite measure to proceed in the consideration process.

As a result of the decision, the Academy and Avalere Health initiated the following three tactics to ensure continued engagement by Stakeholders and Learning Collaborative participants who have supported the measure throughout its development and testing.

- a multi-stakeholder letter writing campaign to CMS upon release of the MUC List,
- ongoing analysis of the measure data by the Academy and Avalere Health, and
- identification of “low-hanging” alternatives to enhance measure adoption in the short-term, such as engagement with Qualified Clinical Data Registries (QCDRs) to support adoption of the measures into their registry(ies) for use and reporting by hospital-based clinicians.

### MQii Learning Collaborative

Approximately 258 facilities participate in the MQii Learning Collaborative. Morrison Healthcare and the Catholic Health Initiatives (73 facilities) joined the MQii Learning Collaborative in November 2018. We anticipate that Morrison and its 776 hospitals and health care systems will help advance malnutrition quality, drive outcomes and highlight registered dietitian nutritionists as the leading experts in malnutrition care.

### MQii Abstracts

- “Advancing Patient-Centered Malnutrition Care Transitions” was presented as a poster in November 2018 at the Gerontological Society of America’s 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston, Mass.
- “Use of an Interdisciplinary Tool to Help Hospital Care Teams Identify and Address Malnutrition Care Gaps” was given in October as an oral presentation at the Society for Medical Decision Making’s 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada.
- “Addressing Nutrition as a Social Determinant of Health through Improved Identification and Care Coordination for Malnutrition across Settings of Care” was presented in December as a poster at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s 30<sup>th</sup> National Forum in Orlando, Fla.

### **Quality Leader Alliance**

The Quality Leader Alliance under the direction of the Quality Strategies Workgroup of the Quality Management Committee conducted three recent Quality Improvement virtual huddles (or “Quickinars”):

- September 13, 2018: “Implementation of Malnutrition Documentation in Two Academic Medical Centers”
- November 11, 2018: “Creation of a Competency Based RD Job Ladder”
- January 31, 2019: “Enculturing Bedside Shift Reporting Using PDSA Methodology”

These Quickinars will be added to three previous events (held in December 2017, March 2018 and July 2018) and will be featured in the upcoming *Practice Tips on Quality Improvement* document being developed for Academy members and credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners which will be available in the Academy’s EatRight Store.

### **Standards of Practice (SOP)/Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP)**

- *Mental Health and Addictions*  
The Revised 2018 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs (Competent, Proficient and Expert) in Mental Health and Addictions is available in the October 2018 *Journal* and online at [eatrightpro.org/sop](http://eatrightpro.org/sop) and [jandonline.org/content/focus](http://jandonline.org/content/focus).
- *Education of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners*  
The Revised 2018 Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs (Competent, Proficient and Expert) in Education of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners is available in the January *Journal* and online at [eatrightpro.org/sop](http://eatrightpro.org/sop) and [jandonline.org/content/focus](http://jandonline.org/content/focus).
- *Updated Quality Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Brochure*  
The Quality Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Brochure was updated to reflect the current Code of Ethics, revised Focus Areas and Academy resources. The brochure also features a “Check your Quality IQ,” an “Individual Scope of Practice” figure and additional quality management resources.

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

Hospitals across the country continue to be audited by CMS contractors, resulting in some denied reimbursement for malnutrition as a major complicating condition. In several of these instances, contracted reviewers used outdated methods for assessing severe malnutrition (e.g., serum proteins). Denials by some private payers are also being noted.

The Office of the Inspector General has included in their 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.

Marsha Schofield serves on ASPEN’s task force charged with developing a strategy to educate the Department of Health and Human Services, OIG and CMS on the 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 ourselves as leaders in addressing malnutrition, Academy and ASPEN staff are working together to extend payer education and advocacy work beyond CMS.

### **Expanding Coverage and Payment for Nutrition Services**

In response to advocacy work by the Academy, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services added registered dietitian nutritionists as eligible clinicians to the Medicare Quality Payment Program (QPP) starting January 1. The QPP, which started in 2016, is one of CMS’ many efforts to shift from a fee-for-service to a value-based payment system. This important action paves the way for RDNs who are Medicare providers to join the ranks of physician providers participating in the Merit-based Incentive System track under the QPP. Based on reporting specific performance measures to CMS, RDNs will have the potential to increase their Medicare payments starting in 2021, rather than be subject to relatively stagnant payments under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. A member education campaign is underway, including updated [website content](#), a special [December 2018 edition](#) of the *MNT Provider* newsletter, webinars, Nutrition Services Payment Committee speakers at affiliate and DPG events, social media announcements and more.

The Academy values collaborations with fellow health care professional associations. We also recognize the growing opportunities to leverage technology to increase access to nutrition care. We recently collaborated with the American Academy of Pediatrics to create a new family of CPT® codes for online digital evaluation services. After approval by the American Medical Association’s Current Procedural Terminology Panel in September, we worked with the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Physicians, American Academy of Family Physicians and American Geriatrics Society on proposed recommendations for values of these services. In January, we presented and secured approval for these recommended values by the American Medical Association’s Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC). The recommended values will now be forwarded to CMS for consideration for the 2020 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.

Note that since 2001, the Academy has had representation on the American Medical Association’s Current Procedural Terminology Advisory Committee and the Relative Value Scale Update Committee Health Care Professionals Advisory Committee (RUC HCPAC). The

CPT coding system offers health care providers a uniform process for coding medical procedures and services. The RUC is an influential group within AMA that makes recommendations for values of health services reimbursed by Medicare and by other payers. Most public and private payers utilize these values to set their payment schedules.

### **Ethics Update**

The [2018 Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession](#) sets forth the values, principles and standards that guide the profession. The Academy/CDR Code of Ethics empowers practitioners to think and act in a manner that upholds the fundamental ideals of the organization and is intended to protect and benefit the practitioner and the patient/client. By accepting membership in the Academy and/or accepting and maintaining CDR credentials, all nutrition and dietetics practitioners agree to abide by the Code. With this in mind, a quiz, aimed at testing and tracking member and non-member knowledge of the Code of Ethics, is in development. It will be launched in three phases during 2019 and will help to promote the Academy's ethics education resources, as well as provide a method to track changes in ethics-related knowledge. Upon completion, practitioners will be redirected to the [Ethics Education Resources](#) that are available to help meet the Continuing Professional Education in Ethics requirement.

### **Meetings**

#### October

- October 16-19: Former President Ethan Bergman, represented the Academy at the World Food Prize (WFP) Hunger Summit in Des Moines, Iowa and participated as a judge with the WFP Global Youth Institute on October 19. He, along with fellow Academy members and RDNs, Mary Pat Raimondi and Angela Tagtow, are working together develop a plan to have a greater presence with the WFP.
- October 19: Academy member and RDN, Barbara Wakeen, our official alliance representative to the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, participated in NCCHC fall conference in Las Vegas, Nev.

#### November

- November 12: Academy member and RDN, Kathrin Eliot, represented the Academy at the National Academy of Medicine's Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professions Workshop in Washington, D.C. Workshops focused on issues in the context of interprofessional education such as continuing professional development, technology, accreditation, and stress and burnout in health professions education.
- November 15: Pat Babjak, Mary Beth Whalen, Alison Steiber, Jennifer Horton, Joe Scariot and I met with Baxter International leaders Valery E. Gallagher, global director of global businesses, government policy, advocacy and reimbursement; and Yuri Salido Mendoza, group marketing manager, Nutrition U.S. Hospital Products. This was an exploratory meeting to identify possible opportunities for collaboration between the Academy and Baxter. Baxter provided an overview of its Global Clinical Nutrition division and the Academy gave a general overview and highlighted research initiatives and industry opportunities.

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