

Following are activity highlights since our May meeting.

Headquarters Realignment Will Mean More Effective, Efficient Collaborations

In July, I announced we would increase centralization and strengthen the Academy's product development, strategy, sales and marketing efforts by realigning the following teams: Research, International and Scientific Affairs, Finance and Administration, and Marketing and Business Development. This realignment allows for better cross-team collaboration and execution, from product conceptualization and innovation through marketing and sales. The changes will advance the Academy's business strategy and allow us to collaborate and execute more efficiently, more effectively and with greater quality.

Rep. Quigley Reception

On August 5, I joined Academy members and RDNs Lisa Eaton Wright and Amy Moore at a reception in Chicago supported by ANDPAC for U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (Ill.). Quigley is a member of the Committee on Appropriations, Chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee and Member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee and Select Committee on Intelligence.



Members Receive President's Council Community Leadership Award

Academy members and RDNs Jacqueline R. Berning and Lisa A. Dorfman were named 2019 recipients of the [President's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition's Community Leadership Award](#). The award is given annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to individuals and organizations that "provide or enhance opportunities to engage in sports, physical activity, fitness, or nutrition-related programs within a community."

- A past Academy Media Spokesperson, and a frequent speaker and author on topics including sports, exercise and training nutrition, Berning has worked as a nutrition coordinator and sports dietitian with professional and amateur athletes at the University of Colorado, USA Swimming, Cleveland Indians and Colorado Rockies. Berning is a professor and chair of the department of health sciences at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.
- Also a past Academy spokesperson, Dorfman is an award-winning nutrition consultant to industry, academia, the public and the media. She works with Olympic, professional, collegiate and junior athletes, including the U.S. Sailing Olympic and Paralympics teams.

Member's Work Profiled in Ohio Medical Board Publication

An article in the premiere edition of [Health News Ohio](#), the official publication of the State Medical Board of Ohio, details how physicians and RDNs are collaborating to address the shortage of nutrition services for oncology patients. The article spotlights the work of Academy member and RDN Colleen K. Spees, associate professor of health and rehabilitation services, at the Comprehensive Cancer Center and James Solove Research Institute at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Journal's Impact Factor Reaches New High

The *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*' impact factor has risen to an all-time high of 4.141. An impact factor is a measure of citations that recent articles have earned in other research and reflects a journal's importance in its field.

Academy Wins Two EXCEL Awards

The Academy received two EXCEL awards recognizing excellence and leadership in nonprofit association media, publishing, marketing and communications. *Food & Nutrition Magazine* received a [Gold Award in the Magazines, General Excellence](#) category. The 2018 National Nutrition Month® social media campaign received a [Gold Award in the Promotional Content](#) category. Academy Spokesperson and RDN Sandra Arévalo, accepted the awards June 24 at the 39th Annual EXCEL Awards Gala in Washington, D.C.

Advancing Relationships with Key Stakeholders

Recognizing that the new and evolving health care environment requires stronger team-based care to achieve shared goals of high-quality, safe and cost-effective care, the Academy continues to collaborate with the National Kidney Foundation to increase utilization of MNT services for patients with nondialysis-dependent chronic kidney disease. Last fall we published the article [Medical Nutrition Therapy for Patients with Non-Dialysis-Dependent Chronic Kidney Disease: Barriers and Solutions](#). Recently 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. Results are being analyzed and will be submitted for publication in a future issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.

Opportunities continue to grow to leverage telehealth as a tool for delivering nutrition services. The Academy continues to identify and pursue opportunities to appropriately position members as the nutrition experts in this rapidly evolving space. One strategy includes collaboration with the Center for Telehealth and e-Health Law (CTeL) to help overcome legal and regulatory barriers that impact the utilization of telehealth services as well as educate stakeholders on the qualified providers of nutrition services. Most recently CTeL invited Pepin Tuma and Marsha Schofield to serve as panelists at a session on "The Wild West of Wellness Trends" at its fall summit.

Since November 2015, the Academy has been engaged in ongoing conversations with the Health Resources and Services Administration about opportunities to better integrate the services and skills of RDNs within HRSA's Bureau of Primary Health Care programs to ensure these vulnerable populations receive the best preventive and primary care possible. In June Marsha Schofield and Michelle Kuppich participated as invited speakers on HRSA's Quarterly Diabetes Conversation with their technical assistance organizations to explore barriers and opportunities to enhance utilization of RDNs and nutrition services to improve diabetes care in HRSA-funded health centers. The Academy will be holding further conversations with some individual participants and using input to inform the development of additional resources to support integration of RDNs and nutrition services into these sites.

Member Engagement Zone Update

The Academy's Member Engagement Zone continues to be very successful at:

- Securing member feedback, comments and opinions on issues affecting the profession
- Obtaining member input quickly on new products and services
- Engaging members in Academy programs, services and initiatives
- Involving members in the directions and initiatives of their Academy.

Nearly 5,000 members participated in the Member Engagement Zone question, “What does the term ‘plant-based diet’ mean to you?” The responses were varied. Most members avoided the specific terms “vegan” and “vegetarian”; 60 percent of members believe a plant-based diet can include some limited animal protein; 28 percent of members believe no animal protein can be included in a plant-based diet.

New Systematic Reviews: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and Cystic Fibrosis

The Evidence Analysis Center announced the publication of [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease](#) and [Cystic Fibrosis](#) systematic reviews. The [COPD guideline](#) was published in early September; the CF guideline is in development and is expected to be published in the winter.

Addressing Audits of Malnutrition Payments to Hospitals

Hospitals across the country continue to be audited by contractors of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Some have been 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 included in its active work plan for 2018 “a review of hospital billing for severe malnutrition.” The OIG 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.

Collaborative efforts are underway between the Academy and ASPEN on outreach and education of public and private payers on the use of appropriate criteria for identifying malnutrition. Academy and ASPEN staff are working together to extend payer education and advocacy work beyond CMS. A task force led by the Academy and ASPEN and including the American Society of Nutrition and the Association of Clinical Documentation Improvement Specialists collaborated to submit [comments](#) to CMS urging it not to move forward with their proposal to reclassify malnutrition diagnostic codes for hospital payment purposes until additional data analysis can be conducted.

Qualified Clinical Data Registries

The four malnutrition electronic clinical quality measures are being adapted for adoption by Qualified Clinical Data Registries. This will enable eligible providers, including physicians and RDNs to use them to report on malnutrition care quality and satisfy requirements for the Merit-based Incentive Payment System. The Academy has begun work with two QCDRs – the Healthcare Solutions’ Premier Clinician Performance Registry and Intellicure Inc.’s Chronic Disease Registry. The Academy plans to submit the four malnutrition eQMs to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for approval into the Qualified Clinical Data Registry. Both QCDRs will provide the Academy with data to assess the validity and reliability of the measures. The adoption into the QCDR will enable eligible RDN providers to use the measures to report on malnutrition care quality and satisfy requirements for the Merit-based Incentive Payment System.

Resources to Support Members as Experts

Since 2006, the Nutrition Services Payment Committee has conducted three surveys of registered dietitian nutritionists related to coding practices and coverage by public and private payers for MNT services. Information from these surveys is used to support our efforts with the AMA RUC to maintain or increase the relative value of the MNT codes which then impacts payment rates. The survey results also inform member education/resource needs; track trends and changes in coverage, reimbursement and codes use; identify the potential need for the Academy to pursue development of new codes for nutrition services; and provides data that is essential to the Academy’s advocacy work. Results of the fourth iteration of the survey, “Trends in Registered Dietitian Nutritionists’ Knowledge and Patterns of Coding, Billing and Payment,” have been published as an [Article in Press](#) in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. Using the results of survey findings, the Nutrition Services

Coverage team is collaborating with the Marketing Team on a year-long Payment Matters marketing campaign 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. The campaign will focus on all members (RDNs and NDTRs), not just those who bill for their services, leveraging the new Higher Logic email platform with messages tailored to specific target audiences within the total membership.

Quality Management Resources

[Case Studies](#) are tools for credentialed RDNs to use for reference related to the scope of practice and quality nutrition and dietetics practice. Case studies provide the necessary guidance, resources, and options that can be used to evaluate whether the RDN or NDTR can safely and effectively provide care and services. The five new open-access case studies in health and wellness coaching and telehealth follow.

- RDNs and Health and Wellness Coaching explores whether health and wellness coaching is within a private practice RDN's scope of practice as well as incorporating coaching techniques into MNT counseling.
- NDTRs and Health and Wellness Coaching outlines an outpatient NDTR's discovery on whether health and wellness coaching is within his or her scope of practice.
- RDNs Delivering Telehealth Nutrition-Related Services in Hospital Outpatient Setting follows a hospital outpatient RDN assessing whether providing MNT via telehealth is within the RDN's scope of practice. This Case Study also provides role examples of RDNs practicing telehealth in such areas as private practice, veterans' affairs and international practice.
- RDNs Delivering Telehealth Diabetes Care and Education-Related Services evaluates whether a hospital System RDN/CDE's ability to see patients through telehealth is within his or her scope of practice.
- NDTRs Delivering Telehealth Nutrition-Related Services assesses whether providing nutrition education via telehealth is within an outpatient NDTR's scope of practice, and reviews topics such as RDN supervision and NDTR autonomy.

New Scope of Practice Decision Algorithm

The [Scope of Practice Decision Algorithm](#) is an open access self-evaluation resource that provides a series of questions for RDNs and NDTRs to determine if a desired activity is within his or her individual scope of practice. Resources with links are included to help inform decision-making. The algorithm replaces the Scope of Practice Decision Tool.

Quality Strategies: New QI Practice Tip and Infographic

The Practice Tips: Getting Started with Quality Improvement is a comprehensive step-by-step guide for RDNs and NDTRs to implement quality improvement in practice settings. The seven steps review quality improvement basics, tools, case studies and Quickinars. The Quality Strategies Infographic Brochure provides an overview of six Quality Strategies resources as well as key information about the National Quality Strategy and its aims and opportunities for RDN and NDTR involvement. Both resources are available at www.eatrightpro.org/qualitystrategies.

Quality Improvement Virtual Huddles

New Quality Leader Alliance members were oriented in June and have begun networking. The QLA, under the direction of the Quality Strategies Task Force of the Quality Management Committee, conducted a July 25 QI virtual huddles (or "Quickinar"), "Malnutrition Diagnosis and Documentation by MDs." Additional Quickinars are scheduled for September, December and January 2020. September's will be on "IDDSI Journey from Plan to Implementation."

Standards of Practice (SOP) and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP)

The Quality Management Committee has approved future project proposals for the following focus area SOP SOPP documents for Fiscal Year 2020:

- Nephrology Nutrition
- Sports Nutrition and Dietetics

The authors and DPG executive committee reviewers have begun orientation to initiate the projects.

The following two SOP/SOPP topics were recently published in the *Journal*.

- Nutrition in Integrative and Functional Medicine
The Revised 2019 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs (Competent, Proficient and Expert) in Nutrition in Integrative and Functional Medicine was published in the June *Journal* and is available online at: www.eatrightpro.org/sop and <https://jandonline.org/content/focus>.
- Clinical Nutrition Management
The Revised 2019 Standards of Professional Performance for RDNs (Competent, Proficient and Expert) in Clinical Nutrition Management was published in the September *Journal* and is available online at www.eatrightpro.org/sop and <https://jandonline.org/content/focus>.

Academy Appoints New Spokespeople for 2019-2022

The Academy appointed four members to three-year terms as [media spokespeople](#) and reappointed six spokespeople to another term. The national volunteer spokesperson network consists of 29 RDNs who conduct thousands of nutrition and healthful eating interviews on behalf of the Academy each year with print, broadcast and online media. The new terms started June 1.

Meetings

June:

- June 12: Mary Beth Whalen, Alison Steiber, Diane Enos and I met with the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute, of Food Technologists, Christie Tarantino-Dean, to discuss opportunities for collaboration.
- June 18: With Kathy Wilson-Gold, Catherine Christie and Linda Farr, I participated in the Foundation's Board meeting in Chicago.

July:

- July 11-12: Terri Raymond, Linda Farr, Mary Russell, Diane Heller, Ellen Shanley and I attended the Nutrition and Dietetics Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C.

August:

- August 21: Terri Raymond, Mary Russell, Sharon Cox, and I were joined by other Academy leaders and staff at Barnes & Thornburg's Celebration of Diversity and Inclusion Dinner and Awards Ceremony in Chicago.
- August 22: Terri Raymond, Mary Russell, Sharon Cox, Aida Miles, Mary Russell, Jeanne Blankenship, Barbara Visocan and I participated in the Academy's inaugural Nutrition and Health Equity Summit, held in Chicago.

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