

Nutrition Education in Medical Schools: Virtual Media Briefing Opening Remarks

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The reason that we have brought you all together is to discuss nutrition education in medical training.

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This includes the role the Academy will play in advancing this critical work alongside the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, or ACEND, which is easier to say, the accrediting agency for education programs preparing students for careers as dietitians and dietetic technicians.

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The science is clear, nutrition plays an essential role in preventing and managing chronic and acute diseases and improving health outcomes.

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Yet nutrition education has not always received the attention it deserves in medical training.

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As the national conversation grows around strengthening nutrition education, we have an important opportunity to better prepare future physicians to understand the role of nutrition in supporting patient care.

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Interdisciplinary teams with experts across the healthcare spectrum are essential to positive health outcomes.

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Physicians need a foundation in nutrition while also understanding the specialized, evidence based expertise registered dietitian nutritionists, or RDMS, bring to the healthcare team.

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RDNs are the nutrition experts.

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We translate complex nutrition science into practical, actionable guidance for patients, communities, and healthcare teams.

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As the organization representing the nutrition and dietetics profession, the Academy is well positioned to help physicians, healthcare providers, and medical schools understand what this work could look like, how to partner with nutrition and dietetics programs, and how to implement models that keep RDN expertise, collaboration, and referral at the center.

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Stronger nutrition education can help future physicians recognize when nutrition may be affecting a

patient's health, understand when nutrition intervention may be appropriate, know when and how to engage in RDN, and refer patients for individualized evidence based nutrition care and medical nutrition therapy when appropriate.

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The Academy and ACEND are helping translate national priorities into practical implementation by convening partners, identifying successful models, and providing programs with flexible pathways and resources aligned with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Medical Education Nutrition Competency Framework.

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Say that, again.

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Importantly, this work is already underway nationwide.

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ACEND's national survey of accredited nutrition and dietetics programs found that more than 100 programs have expressed interest in helping move this effort forward, and many have already begun providing nutrition education for medical and other health professions students.

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The ACEND Nutrition in Medical Education micro credential is designed first as a framework for ACEND accredited nutrition and dietetics education programs.

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This is a micro credential for programs, not individuals.

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The micro credential is aligned with ACEND curriculum competencies and the HHS Medical Education Nutrition Framework, helping programs build on established nutrition and dietetics education while supporting broader national efforts to strengthen nutrition education in medical and health professions training.

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There is no single one-size-fits-all approach.

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Programs in medical schools have different structures, timelines, resources and implementation can draw on flexible options such as existing course enrollment, guest lectures, modules, RDN, physician co teaching, culinary medicine, teaching kitchens, case based learning, and micro credential pathways.

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The conversation will continue after today at the Academy's Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo, October 24th to 27th in San Antonio, TX, providing an opportunity to share successful approaches, strengthen partnerships, and explore how RDN expertise can further advance nutrition education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and patient care.