

The following are activity highlights since our September 2023 Board meeting.

IDEA Committee Update

The IDEA Committee's Pipeline Subcommittee is working with Member Interest Groups to provide resources for mentoring programs designed to assist members from underrepresented groups with passing the RDN/NDTR exams and beginning their nutrition and dietetics careers. The subcommittee is sharing best practices for managing mentoring programs derived from benchmarking research, as well as encouraging MIGs to apply for IDEA grants that can financially assist with their efforts. The IDEA Committee is continuing its work with the BOD's assistance to draft an encompassing IDEA Philosophy that will articulate the Academy's dedication to IDEA principles.

Advocacy and Public Policy Update

Messages sent to Capitol Hill in support of policies that impact the nutrition and dietetics profession totaled 36,483 from January 1 to December 10.

MNT Act Reintroduced in Congress

The Academy is a proud [champion of the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act](#), which was introduced in November by U.S. Sens. Susan Collins (Maine) and Gary Peters (Mich.) and U.S. Reps. Robin Kelly (Ill.) and Jen Kiggans (Va.). Passage of this bill would be a win-win for the profession and communities we serve; it would increase access to nutrition care for seniors with chronic diseases; authorize health care professionals to refer patients for MNT; and foster health equity. Please take the action alert today if you have not yet done so. This public action alert can be shared with your networks. As of December 10, 6,086 members have taken action; 7,133 non-members have taken the public action alert.

Influence and Promote Policies: MNT

The Academy's public advocacy campaign amplifies our influence and promotes policies that facilitate greater access to nutritious foods and nutrition services. By garnering public support, the Academy can advocate for policies that prevent and manage chronic diseases, contributing to improved public health outcomes. Additionally, increased backing can lead to expanded coverage for medical nutrition therapy services, broadening accessibility and benefiting a larger population.

A white paper on MNT being released in February will serve as a crucial tool by providing a comprehensive overview of what MNT entails, outlining benefits to patients and highlighting the diverse range of conditions it positively affects. By summarizing the scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of MNT in improving outcomes across diseases and conditions, the paper will become a persuasive resource for policymakers, reinforcing the importance of integrating MNT into health care policies, ultimately promoting better patient outcomes and public health.

Dietitian Licensure Compact: Final Language and Next Steps

The Dietitian Licensure Compact's final draft is complete; the next phase involves legislative and advocacy efforts. The compact's advocacy plan is the outcome of careful and strategic planning and there are tasks to address on multiple fronts. Affiliate leaders will be contacted by Academy staff to discuss the advocacy strategy for the upcoming steps in their state.

Avoid Government Shutdown: Academy Urges Congress to Take Action by Early 2024

The Academy calls on Congress to approve appropriations legislation before the end of the continuing resolution to provide funding for all government operations, including agencies that deliver essential food, nutrition and health services and safeguard the public from threats to food safety. The continuing resolution passed by Congress and signed by President Biden in November is a step in the right direction; however, more work remains to ensure nutrition programs and services are fully funded in the federal budget. While the continuing resolution keeps programs and services funded at current levels, they remain at risk for cuts as lawmakers negotiate the final bills. If an agreement on the appropriations package is not met by the January 19 and February 2 expiration dates, the threat of a government shutdown will once again return.

Available Now: Fall 2023 Issue of *MNT Provider*

Regardless of practice setting, the *MNT Provider* is a must-read for RDNs. Available exclusively for Academy members, the quarterly [MNT Provider newsletter](#) covers topics relating to payment for RDN-provided services. Content spans billing and coding, insurance and coverage, to service delivery.

Academy and Illinois Affiliate Advocate for Resolution of Licensure Application Delays

The Academy and Illinois affiliate were recently made aware of concerns from practitioners seeking to become licensed dietitian nutritionists, educational institutions, and employers in Illinois regarding slow application processing and communication that is resulting in employment challenges and financial burden. The Academy and IAND Z worked to advocate on this important issue, urging for swift resolution in a [letter](#) to Gov. JB Pritzker, whose administration oversees the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Academy Supports Feeding Our Rural Kids Act

I voiced the Academy's support of the [FORK Act](#): "Just as school kitchens need the right equipment to prepare and serve healthful meals, school foodservice programs need to make sure meals get to children who need them most. For some students, school meals provide up to half their daily nutritional needs, but this important food source may not be available during the summer, particularly in rural areas with high rates of food insecurity and lack of transportation to summer foodservice sites. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is proud to support the Feeding Our Rural Kids Act and urges Congress to pass this important bill."

Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act

The [Academy commended](#) U.S. Sens. Gary Peters (Mich.) and Shelley Capito (W.Va.) for their leadership in championing the recently introduced Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act, which aims to prevent cases of diabetes and reduce related health disparities in the Medicare population.

Academy Supports Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act

The Academy is proud to support the Child Care Nutrition Enhancement Act, which increases reimbursement to organizations including Head Start, child care centers and family child care programs for meals and snacks through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The bill makes changes to the reimbursement process to more adequately recompense child care providers for the nutritious food provided to children in their care.

Medicare Payment Cuts Advocacy

The Academy joined nearly 50 organizations in urging House and Senate leaders to halt the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Healthcare Common Procedure Coding Systems add-on code G2211 in the calendar year 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule. Without congressional intervention, this code and the resulting Medicare payment cuts will negatively impact many medical practices and threaten patients' timely access to care.

Advocating for the Profession

- The Academy joined nonprofit and nonpartisan organizations in providing congressional leaders feedback to the Health Care Task Force's request for solutions to improve health outcomes and reduce federal health care spending in the budget.
- In comments submitted to the Department of the Treasury, Department of Labor, Internal Revenue Service, Employee Benefits Security Administration and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Academy advocated for equitable coverage for medical nutrition therapy in the treatment of eating disorders. Passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 aimed to ensure individuals living with eating disorders would have access to the appropriate levels of nutrition care necessary to treat their condition; however, this aim has not been realized.
- The Academy joined more than 50 organizations in urging congressional leaders to stop a 3.4% cut in Medicare physician payment that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently finalized in the Calendar Year 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule.

International Confederation of Dietetic Associations

The Academy enjoys a longstanding relationship with ICDA as a National Dietetic Association member. Academy member Marty Yadrick, MBI, MS, RDN, FAND, serves as ICDA secretary and an elected voting member on the board. Tatyana El-Kour, PhD, MA, MS, RDN, FAND, serves as the Academy's representative to ICDA.

The Academy was represented at ICDA's annual meeting on September 12, held by videoconference originating at Rome, Italy. The meeting revisited key ICDA activities including: transition to a new Secretariat; ICDA website development using a new standalone and interactive [platform](#); Dietitians of Canada's support of ICDA 2024; and the ICDA auditing report. Flagship initiatives were also discussed, including efforts of the Communications Committee and ICDA Marketing, the Sustainable Food Systems project and the Commission on Dietitian Nutritionist Education, Accreditation (I-CDEA).

Every four years ICDA hosts the International Congress of Nutrition and Dietetics as an opportunity “to engage, learn and contribute to the advancement of nutrition and dietetics” with colleagues from around the world. The 19th ICND will be held June 12 to 14, 2024, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Early-bird registration is open. [Learn more](#) about the conference on ICND’s website.

Academy and Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists

As a part of the Alliance program, the Academy and Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists presented “The RDN’s Role in Reducing the Trifecta of Metabolic Risks in Diabetes Care” at FNCE. The speakers were Kathy Warwick, RDN, LDN, CDCES and Shayna Frost, RD, LDN, CDCES.

2023 Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

Academy member Kathrin Eliot, PhD, RDN, LD, FAND, represented the nutrition and dietetics profession by serving on the task force that revised the Interprofessional Education Collaborative Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice. View the on-demand [webinar](#) to learn more about the newly revised competencies, including how its changes address feedback from the IPE community.

SUBMITTED BY: Lauri Wright, PhD, RDN, LDN, FAND