

Congressional Resource: Value of Nutrition Services in Prevention and Treatment



About Us

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, with more than 100,000 credentialed practitioners, comprised of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), nutrition and dietetic technicians, registered (NDTRs) and advanced-degree nutritionists. RDNs and NDTRs play a key role in shaping the public's food choices, improving people's nutritional status and preventing and treating chronic disease.



Background

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is prepared to work with all leaders to find non-partisan public policy solutions that promote health and reduce the burden of chronic disease through nutrition services and interventions.

- U.S. health spending per capita in 2015 was higher than any other nation.
- Spending reached around \$9,900 per person for a total of \$3.2 trillion.
- Despite monetary efforts, millions of Americans continue to suffer from preventable diseases.
- We need a paradigm shift that prioritizes cost-effective and clinically effective prevention and treatment with nutrition at their core.

KEY TENETS The Academy maintains **five key tenets** for analyzing any legislation to reform health care:

1.

The health of all Americans should improve as a result of our health policy choices. Sufficient resources must be made available to ensure optimal health.

2.

Access to quality health care is a right that must be extended to all Americans.

3.

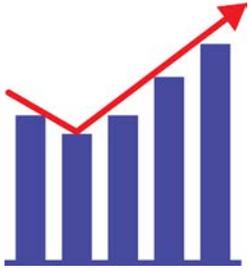
Nutrition services, from pre-conception through end of life, are an essential component of comprehensive health care.

4.

Stable, sufficient and reliable funding is necessary for our health care system to provide everyone access to a core package of benefits.

5.

Health care must be patient-centered.



Invest in Prevention

Invest sustainable resources in evidence-based prevention programs that address chronic diseases, nutrition and food security across the life cycle

- Poor nutrition is one of four health risk behaviors that leads to chronic diseases.
- Reversing our country's health status requires comprehensive, coordinated approaches.
- **We urge Congress to maintain the Prevention and Public Health Fund.**

Ensure all Americans have access to nutrition and safe food

- RDNs lead successful efforts through programs like SNAP-ed, WIC, senior programs and more.
- These federally-funded programs provide nutrition education at critical, vulnerable points in life.
- **We urge Congress to invest the resources necessary to sustain these critical programs.**

Promote effective programs and initiatives that promote health equity

- Health care offered should address the issues of disparities, not just provide access.
- Issue of adequate compensation for physician/non-physician care must be addressed.
- **We urge Congress to apply culturally competent responses to these issues among populations disproportionately affected.**



Ensure Nutrition's Inclusion in Comprehensive Health Care Delivery Systems

Support efforts to improve access to health care and nutrition services and include coverage of medical nutrition therapy in core preventive/clinical services

- Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) and other evidence-based nutrition services are essential for comprehensive health care.
- Almost all chronic diseases have a nutrition component, yet gaps remain in how our health care system addresses nutrition's role.
- **We urge a legislative solution ensuring coverage of cost-effective MNT provided by RDNs for all nutrition-related chronic diseases.**

Improve chronic care management and wrap-around services

- Payment methods must be developed to essential services that are not exclusively tied to a primary care provider.
- Without ensuring coverage, no amount of improved care coordination will achieve significant reductions in short- or long-term health care costs.
- **We recommend that RDNs be eligible to bill for chronic care management services as our training and qualifications should allow.**



For more information, visit the
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at eatright.org