

In Brief

Achieving a Transparent, Actionable Framework for Public-Private Partnerships for Food and Nutrition Research

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SUMMARY

A number of nutrition, food safety, and health-related non-profit organizations and government agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, US Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and Food and

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Sarah Davis Ohlhorst, MS, RD, is Director of Government Relations for the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) in Bethesda, Maryland, as well as a Registered Dietitian. She has numerous responsibilities at ASN, including development of government relations initiatives, coordination of public affairs activities, and service as a liaison to various ASN member groups and allied organizations. Ms. Ohlhorst oversees the development of policy-oriented documents, ensuring that they appropriately reflect ASN's scientific and policy views, and provides leadership on grants and cooperative agreements. She is coauthor on numerous peer-reviewed publications and a member of the American Society for Nutrition, Institute of Food Technologists, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association). She graduated with distinction from Virginia Tech with her bachelor's in Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise in 2001 and her master's degree in 2004.

Linda D. Meyers, PhD, is a nutrition consultant in the Washington, DC area. She has served as Senior Science Advisor for the American Society for Nutrition and is the former Director of the Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) at the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies in Washington, DC. From 1986–2001 she served as Senior Nutrition Advisor, Deputy Director, and Acting Director in the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Meyers has a BA in health and physical education from Goshen College in Indiana (1968), an MS in food and nutrition from Colorado State University (1974), and a PhD in nutritional sciences from Cornell University (1978). Her research focused on population indicators of nutritional status. Dr. Meyers has received awards for her contributions to public health, including the Secretary's Distinguished Service Award for Healthy People 2010, the Conrad A. Elvehjem Award for Public Service in Nutrition from ASN, the IOM's Cecil Award, the National Academies Group Distinguished Service awards for *The DRI's Essential Guide* and for the Emmy-nominated *The Weight of the Nation* and *The Weight of the Nation: Kids* film series, and the Surgeon General's Medallion. In April 2013, she was elected a Fellow of the American Society for Nutrition.

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Drug Administration, participated in a working meeting in December 2014 in Washington, to discuss and reach a consensus among individuals participating on principles that would provide guidance to research public-private partnerships (PPPs) related to food, nutrition, and health. The group reached consensus on the following principles designed to develop a transparent and actionable framework for establishment and operation of PPPs to achieve the best food- and nutrition-related research outcomes. Participants used the International Life Sciences Institute North America (ILSI North America) 2013 published principles as a starting point.¹ This meeting was motivated by the need to stimulate the expansion, accessibility, and acceptance of PPPs by unifying and moving existing principles for food and nutrition research PPPs forward, making them publicly available for all interested parties to reference and use. Although a number of groups have addressed criteria for conduct of PPPs, most reports have not been readily accessible in the public domain. Now, with such widespread involvement and endorsement, it is hoped that these principles will be broadly used by the collaborating organizations and others to create PPPs that will ultimately improve public health. The principles, listed below, have been published along with a summary of the meeting to develop them in the June 2015 issue of the *American Journal for Clinical Nutrition*.²

PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH

Prerequisite Principle:

1. Have a clearly defined and achievable goal to benefit the public.

Governance Principles:

2. Articulate a governance structure including a clear statement of work, rules, and partner roles, responsibilities, and accountability, to build in trust, transparency, and mutual respect as core operating principles—acknowledging there may be “deal breakers” precluding the formation of an effective partnership in the first place.
3. Ensure that objectives will meet stakeholder partners' public and private needs, with a clearly defined baseline to monitor progress and measure success.

Operational Principles:

4. Considering the importance of balance, ensure that all members possess appropriate levels of bargaining power.

5. Minimize conflict of interest by recruiting a sufficient number of partners to mitigate influence by any single member and to broaden private-sector perspectives and expertise.
6. Engage partners who agree upon specific and fundable (or supportable through obtainable resources) research questions to be addressed by the partnership.
7. Enlist partners who are committed to the long term as well as the sharing of funding and research data.
8. Along with government and the private sector, include academics and other members of civil society (eg, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, consumers) as partners.
9. Select objective measurements capable of providing common ground for both public and private-sector research goals.
10. Adopt research questions and methodologies established by partners with transparency about all competitive interests, ideally in the precompetitive space.
11. Be flexible in implementing the PPP process.
12. Ensure ongoing transparent communications both among partners and between PPP and the public.

The consensus on principles to serve as a framework for creating and operating PPPs can open future opportunities

for research collaborations, offering the value of shared expertise from the different sectors/players and enhancing public confidence in PPP research. Mutual trust will likely be enhanced between the public and private sectors, including industry, nongovernmental organizations, foundations, and other such entities. The resulting boost to the movement toward PPPs is timely and important to grow resources for nutrition and food research.

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IN MEMORIAM: KRISTEN W. MCNUTT, PhD, JD (1941–2015)

Nutrition Today mourns the loss of our longtime Editorial Board member, Lany Kristen Wallwork McNutt, MSc, PhD, JD, who passed away at age 73. Kristen obtained her bachelor degree from Duke, her Masters from Columbia, her doctor of philosophy in biochemistry from Vanderbilt and her law degree from DePaul University. She passed the New York Bar and also became a member of the bar in the District of Columbia. Prior to incorporating her consulting firm, Consumer Choices, Inc. in 1988, Kristen was a Congressional Science Fellowship with the Senate Agriculture Committee, Executive Officer of the National Nutrition Consortium in Washington, D.C.; Assistant Professor of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago; Associate Director of the Good Housekeeping Institute, New York; and Vice President for Consumer and Scientific Affairs, Kraft Foods, Chicago-area. She was active in many professional organizations, and served on several national governmental advisory bodies and committees. Kristen had many publications in her bibliography including over five years of editorials in *Nutrition Today*, *Food Engineering*, and the *British Nutrition Foundation Journal*. She was an Associate Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Food Science Technology*, and together with her husband, published the college nutrition textbook, *Making Food Choices*. She started her own monthly publication *Consumer Magazines Digest* in 1989 which continued until 2011. Our condolences to her husband, David R. McNutt, MD.

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