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The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding Healthy People 2020 to ensure that objectives reflect current public health priorities. ASN is a not-for-profit, professional scientific society dedicated to bringing together the world's top researchers to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition. ASN has more than 4,600 members in the United States and around the world, working throughout government, clinical practice, academia and industry, to conduct nutrition research that helps individuals live longer, healthier and more productive lives.

Given Healthy People 2020's emphasis on prevention, it is important to note the significant role of nutrition in health promotion and prevention. The enormous health and economic burden of many diet-related diseases worldwide is largely preventable. Good nutrition can help to improve global public health and serve to ameliorate the disproportionate burden of illness in certain populations already adversely effected by health care disparities. We strongly believe that integrating nutrition education into the training of health care professionals will improve overall clinical care and research in this important area and will complement public health and community based-campaigns.

ASN is supportive of the proposed "Educational and Community-Based Programs" objectives, but proposes that an additional objective sub-bullet be added to Healthy People 2020 Educational and Community-Based Programs objectives ECBP-12 through ECBP-19 to reflect the following goal:

"Increase the number of academic institutions that include nutrition as an integral component of health professional education and training programs."

For example, following ECBP-19 "Increase the inclusion of core clinical prevention and population health content in Doctor of Dental Surgery and/or Doctor of Dental Medicine granting colleges and schools of Dentistry," ECBP-19.7 would read: "Increase the inclusion of nutrition in Doctor of Dental Surgery and/or Doctor of Dental Medicine granting colleges and schools of Dentistry."

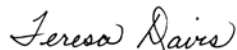
ASN strongly believes it is critically important to ensure that clinical nutrition principles and practices are effectively addressed across the continuum of health professional education, training, and competency testing. This includes the education and training of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, and other health professionals. Inter-professional nutrition education contributes to more coordinated care, better health professional performance and improved patient outcomes.

Although medical professionals are used as a resource by 20% of individuals to improve the healthfulness of their diet (1), training of health professionals in nutrition is insufficient and generally viewed as inadequate to facilitate acquisition of needed

competencies. In a survey of medical schools, Adams et al. found that the percentage of medical schools that offered a dedicated nutrition course declined from 35% in 2000 to 25% in 2008 (2). Many clinicians, both trainees and those in practice, are uncomfortable addressing nutrition-related topics with their patients (3,4). The recent U.S. Preventive Services Task Force report on intensive counseling for obesity (5), and the subsequent CMS adoption of its recommendations and approval of intensive counseling in the primary care setting based on this report, hopefully heralds an increasing trend in the provision nutrition counseling in health care. If so, we must ensure that all health professionals are prepared to confidently and adequately provide these services.

The American Society for Nutrition is highly supportive of Healthy People 2020 and appreciates the opportunity to submit comments to help guide the development of Healthy People 2020 objectives. ASN would be happy to supply additional information regarding the need for nutrition education and training of all health professionals. Please contact Sarah Ohlhorst, M.S., R.D., Director of Government Relations, at 301.634.7281 or sohlhorst@nutrition.org if ASN may provide further assistance.

Sincerely,



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1. International Food Information Council (IFIC) Food and Health Survey 2011. Last accessed online November 2, 2012.
http://www.foodinsight.org/Resources/Detail.aspx?topic=2011_IFIC_Foundation_Food_Health_Survey_Media_Resources
2. Adams KM, Kohlmeier MP, Zeisel SH. Nutrition in Medicine: Nutrition Education for Medical Students and Residents. *Nutrition in Clinical Practice*. 2010; 25: 471-480.
3. DeLegge, MH, Alger-Mayer, S, Van Way III, CW, Gramlich, L. "Specialty Residency Training in Medical Nutrition Education: History and Proposal for Improvement." *Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition*. 2010; 34 (suppl): 47S-56S.
4. Friedman, G, Kushner, R, Alger-Mayer, S, Bistrain, B, Gramlich, L, Marik, PE. "Proposal for Medical School Nutrition Education: Topics and Recommendations." *Journal of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition*. 2010; 34 (suppl): 40S-46S.
5. U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. *Ann Intern Med*. 2012; 157: 373-378.