



March 25, 2014

Public Witness Testimony from John E. Courtney, Ph.D.; Executive Officer; American Society for Nutrition

The Honorable Jack Kingston  
Chairman

Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Ranking Member

Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 appropriations. **The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) respectfully requests \$32 billion dollars for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and \$182 million dollars for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ National Center for Health Statistics (CDC/ NCHS) in Fiscal Year 2015.** ASN is dedicated to bringing together the world's top researchers to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition, and

has more than 5,000 members working throughout academia, clinical practice, government, and industry.

### **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

The NIH is the nation's premier sponsor of biomedical research and is the agency responsible for conducting and supporting 86 percent of federally-funded basic and clinical nutrition research. Although nutrition and obesity research makes up less than eight percent of the NIH budget, some of the most promising nutrition-related research discoveries have been made possible by NIH support. NIH nutrition-related discoveries have impacted the way clinicians prevent and treat heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases. For example, U.S. death rates from heart disease and stroke have decreased by more than 60 percent, and the proportion of older adults with chronic disabilities has dropped by one-third. With additional support for NIH, additional breakthroughs and discoveries to improve the health of all Americans will be made possible.

Investment in biomedical research generates new knowledge, improved health, and leads to innovation and long-term economic growth. A decade of flat-funding, followed by sequestration cuts, has taken a significant toll on NIH's ability to support research. Such economic stagnation is disruptive to training, careers, long-range projects and ultimately to progress. Increasing the NIH budget to \$32 billion dollars would fully restore the

funding that was lost to sequestration and support at least 600 additional competing research project grants. **As a first step toward sustainable growth, ASN recommends a minimum of \$32 billion dollars for NIH in Fiscal Year 2015.** NIH needs sustainable and predictable budget growth in order to fulfill the full potential of biomedical research, including nutrition research, and to improve the health of all Americans.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics  
(CDC NCHS)**

The National Center for Health Statistics, housed within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is the nation's principal health statistics agency. **ASN recommends a Fiscal Year 2015 funding level of \$182 million dollars for NCHS,** consistent with the President's budget request, to help ensure uninterrupted collection of vital health and nutrition statistics, and help cover the costs needed for technology and information security maintenance and upgrades that are necessary to replace aging survey infrastructure.

The NCHS provides critical data on all aspects of our health care system, and is responsible for monitoring the nation's health and nutrition status through surveys such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Data collected through NHANES are essential for tracking the nutrition, health and well-being of the American population, and are especially important for observing nutritional and health

trends in our nation's children. Nutrition monitoring is critical to guide policy development in the area of health and nutrition, including food safety, food labeling, military rations and dietary guidance, including the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of nutrition assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and to monitor the prevalence of obesity and other chronic diseases in the U.S. and track the performance of preventive interventions.

Thank you.