Letter from the Editor

Thank you all for the warm welcome to the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) Executive Committee! Kay Sisk, past Newsletter Editor, and Kathleen Cullinen, Associate Newsletter Editor, provided a great hand-off with the Summer 2016 edition. Over the last few months, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Kay and Kathleen to assist with my transition into this new role. I am grateful for all the guidance and have learned so much. I must admit pulling this edition together was a bit of a learning curve for me. Going forward we will continue to improve the process and provide meaningful content to our members, to include CEU articles.

This issue features updates from the PHCNPG Chair, topics of interest, current research studies, PHCNPG members in the field, highlights from the PHCNPG events at the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ (FNCE®), 2016 PHCNPG Award recipients, and a Call for 2017 Award Nominations.

In each newsletter issue, you have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the year. Tell us how we’re doing, what you like, or what you want in future issues. Please click on the “Rate This Issue” button to fill out a brief survey.

Thank you to the Newsletter Team for your editorial support of the publication of this issue. Kathleen and I look forward to continuing to serve the PHCNPG during the 2016-2017 membership year.

Wishing you all a Healthy and Happy Holiday Season!

Brigette Grimes, MS, RD, CSSD
Newsletter Editor
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CURRENT NEWS | Policy and Advocacy

The Importance of Policy and Advocacy to Our Profession: Support for Current Academy Priorities

Judy Klavens-Giunta, RDN, PHCN DPG Policy and Advocacy leader

“To keep policy and advocacy priorities current, last year priorities were restructured from 2012 when they were created and received Board of Directors approval. The restructure reset the focus on four issues that allow the Academy’s policy and advocacy work to integrate state and national issues. This includes consumer and community concerns such as access to quality health care, in addition to issues related to professional areas of practice. Following are the public policy focus areas for 2015-2017. You can read about them in more detail by clicking on the links below:”

Disease Prevention and Treatment
Lifecycle Nutrition
Healthy Food Systems and Access
Quality Health Care
The Academy’s Washington D.C. Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff regularly works on current and upcoming legislation important to the profession, and frequently appears on the Hill to testify at legislative committee hearings and participate in regular lobbying. However, the Academy increasingly depends on and needs members to be more involved. Member involvement and support for policy priorities is essential for success in this area. If we as professionals hope to have an impact on the national and state legislative policy, laws, regulations, etc. that affect all areas of our practice, it is essential that we all play a part in supporting the Academy’s efforts, as well as reaching out individually.

There are many ways to be involved:

**Action Alerts**

It is important to respond to and participate in Action Alerts. Action Alerts are activated when the Academy needs to mobilize its members to contact their federal legislators to let them know how important a specific issue is to us as constituents and professionals. It’s a chance to remind legislators of the important part that nutrition plays in a healthy lifestyle, and how it can lower health care costs. The Academy’s **Action Center** makes it easy to send correspondence created by the Academy, with the specific message of the action alert using the Academy supplied correspondence and easy link to your federal legislators. You will have to do is click on the Action Center link (above – no login is necessary), and supply your personal information. Your federal legislator’s name(s) will appear – click “Take Action.” Your message is automatically sent. It takes less than 10 minutes.

The most current action alert is “Support National Clinical Commission Legislation in U.S. Senate.” If you have already participated, thank you, if not, please click on the Action Center link in the paragraph above and participate. Other Action Alerts still open are: “Let’s Fight Malnutrition September 2016,” and the “Treat and Reduce Obesity Act.” Past Action Alerts have included those to encourage legislators to support the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, the *Dietary Guidelines* and the Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act.

**Request from the Academy for Comments on Proposed and Current Regulations and Legislation**

The Academy Policy Initiatives and Advocacy office in Washington, D.C. also reaches out to practice groups to get member opinion and input to include in letters and recommendations submitted to federal agencies and legislative committees on various regulations and legislation relating to the priority areas listed above. Since we are stakeholders in these areas, our input can significantly improve the information included in the Academy’s submissions. We are the practitioners out in the field who can contribute our unique perspective and knowledge on how regulations and laws can and do uniquely affect our efforts.

Public Health Community Nutrition (PHCN) has in the past sent out requests for comment from PHCNPG members via eblast and via the listserv. We are working to streamline this process to make it easier to submit feedback for us to pass on to the Academy’s Policy Initiatives and Advocacy staff at the D.C. office. We will be creating a link on our website that will allow you to submit comments more easily.

**ANDPAC**

ANDPAC is the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Political Action Committee. ANDPAC is the only political action committee that specifically focuses on food and nutrition. ANDPAC is considered one of the top Political Action Committees (PACs) in the country that focuses on health issues.

The goal of ANDPAC is to support pro-nutrition candidates for federal office. Go to the ANDPAC page for a list of websites and resources that will help you better understand ANDPAC and how its work relates to our government policies and issues important to the Academy.

ANDPAC also supports the Academy’s Policy Initiative and Advocacy team in Washington, D.C.

ANDPAC, like other PACs, collects contributions from Academy members and uses these funds to support political candidates running for federal office with a pro-nutrition focus. It is possible to request funds to support a local candidate for federal office. The ANDPAC Board of Directors has set certain criteria that the candidate must meet before a donation is approved. For more information go to the **ANDPAC Political Contributions** page.

It is important to remember that ANDPAC is supported by member donations. All members benefit from ANDPAC activities. Your support of these activities with your donations is critical to the success of ANDPAC’s efforts. Go to the **ANDPAC Donations** page to learn more.

**Public Policy Workshop (PPW)**

Each spring the Academy hosts a Public Policy Workshop “Food and Nutrition Summit,” attended by close to 500 Academy members. PPW focuses on several important issues that affect our profession. During the workshop, attendees receive up-to-date information about these issues, and guidance on how to best advocate with legislators. During PPW, the Academy recognizes members of Congress who have shown outstanding support for nutrition and health related issues, and presents an Academy member with the Public Policy Leadership Award.

The culmination of the workshop is a visit to the Hill to meet with congressional members from your voting district and state. It is exciting to walk through the House of Representatives and Senate office buildings. Go to the **PPW** page at [eatrightpro.org](http://eatrightpro.org) for more information.

Whatever activity or activities you choose, it is important to be involved. Contact me at klavensgi@gmail.com for more information on these activities, and to volunteer to participate in submitting comments to the Academy, as well as work with us on supporting policy and advocacy activities.

“If nutrition is your profession, policy should be your passion.”

Click on the links below for updates from *On the Pulse* at [eatrightpro.org](http://eatrightpro.org) for the latest public policy updates from the Academy.

**ANDPAC News and Updates**

From the Hill

State Matters

Regulatory Comments

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**Call for Authors: The Digest**

Preparations for the Spring Issue of The Digest are underway!

The Newsletter team is seeking authors to contribute content relevant to the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) membership.

If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to an upcoming issue of *The Digest*, contact Brigette Grimes (Newsletter Editor) and Kathleen Cullinen (Associate Newsletter Editor) at phcnpg.communications@gmail.com, and include “Newsletter” in the subject line.
Obesity Prevention in Child Care Settings

Noereem Mena, MS, RDN. PhD Candidate, Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences, The University of Rhode Island, mnoereem@gmail.com

Childhood obesity affects nearly 9% of preschool-aged children (ages 2-5 years) in the United States.1,2 Although child obesity prevalence is below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 9.4%, nearly 23% of U.S. preschool-aged children are still overweight or obese.3,4

In recent decades, there has been an increase in the number of parents who utilize organized child care for their children.5 Children enrolled in this service spend an average of 35 hours a week in child care, where they consume most of their daily calories.5,6 To address obesity in preschool-aged children, efforts have been made toward improving child care nutrition policies to help support and promote the development of healthy eating behaviors in early childhood.5

There are federal policies and programs which specifically focus on improving nutrition and health for infants, toddlers, and young children in both home-based and center-based child care.7 Most notably is the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program provides nutritious meals and snacks to over 4 million children in child care settings. This past year, revisions were made to CACFP to better align meal patterns with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans; the first major revision since 1968. These revisions include:

- Serving only low-fat or non-fat milk to children ages 2 and older
- Separating the combined fruit and vegetable component into separate components
- Limiting fruit juice to no more than 4-6 fluid ounces once per day for children ages 1-6
- No longer counting grain-based desserts toward the grains component
- Reducing added sugar intake by limiting the amount of sugar in yogurts and breakfast cereals served
  - No more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces of yogurt
  - No more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce of cereal
- Making drinking water available throughout the day

Full Implementation of the New Meal Pattern is Required by October 1, 2017

Other federal policies and programs which aim to improve the nutrition and physical activity environments of child care settings include: 1) Implementation of the 2014 Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG); 2) Head Start Performance Standards; and 3) the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Early Childhood Initiatives. For the full list and more information on these programs, check out the State of Obesity - Policy Analysis of Early Childhood Policies and Programs.

As registered dietitians nutritionists, it is important to be familiar with these policies and programs. Understanding them and their development can help us to identify other areas for improvement in child care settings, and advocate for the improvement of nutrition policies. Early prevention of overweight and obesity is crucial, and can impact the trajectory of a child’s life.

References:

Governor Jack Markell of Delaware signs “Breakfast After the Bell” Law

Sarah Woods, BS, NDTR

Delaware’s “Breakfast After the Bell” law, or House Bill 408, was signed into law by Governor Jack Markell on Sept. 14, 2016. The law requires Delaware schools already participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA, Public Law 111-296; Dec. 13, 2010) to implement alternative service models for school breakfast by the 2017-2018 school year.1

These service models allow students opportunities to eat a healthy breakfast by serving food in settings and during times more flexible than the standard before-school, cafeteria-only option. Specific models mentioned in the legislation are Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go Breakfast, and Second Chance Breakfast, but schools are not limited to those options.1

Schools participating in CEP already provide breakfast at no cost to their students, but despite this cost reduction, students still face obstacles such as time constraints and social stigma that can prevent them from participating.

The Food Bank of Delaware, the Delaware State Education Association, and the Delaware State Department of Education were in full support of House Bill 408. In Delaware, about one out of every five children are food insecure, one of the many problems that the Food Bank of Delaware, a member of Feeding America, works to combat in the state.3 “It was exciting to be involved with the passage of House Bill 408,” says Chad Robinson, the Food Bank of Delaware’s Director of Strategic Initiatives. “We worked tirelessly throughout the session to help legislators understand how food insecurity affects our state and particularly our children,” said Robinson. “Serving breakfast through alternative service models increases participation in breakfast and positively impacts our schools.”

According to the Food Research and Action Council (FRAC), alternative breakfast service models, such as those mentioned in House Bill 408,
break down barriers by reducing social stigma and timeframe challenges. Alternative breakfast service models achieve this by no longer singling out students who are being served breakfast through the program, and by allowing the breakfast serving process to become more streamlined. As a result, more students can access the program and participation rates are higher. Research compiled by FRAC shows that students participating in alternative serving model breakfast programs consume more nutritious breakfasts and show measurable improvements in attendance, test performance, and mental health.

Delaware Representative Ed Osienksi, House Bill 408’s sponsor, is optimistic that the passage of the “Breakfast After the Bell” law is a step in the right direction for improving the nutrition of his state’s youngest residents. “We’ve seen how successful school breakfast programs can be when schools and policymakers think outside the box, and we want that success in our state. Thanks to this new law, we will see that progress continue in our schools,” commented Osienksi.

References:

### RESEARCH | Older Adults

#### Aging Expectations Among Older Adults of Low Socioeconomic Status

**Jody L. Vogelzang, PhD, RDN, FAND, CHES**

The Theory of Planned Behavior is based on the three constructs of intention and behavior: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In populations with lower socioeconomic status (SES), poorer life expectations, poorer lifestyle habits, and a lower belief of personal control exists. Authors argue that motivation toward a healthier lifestyle would be difficult given the aging expectations (AE) of this group.

This article described a research study with 170 older adults (60 years of age and older) living in Ontario, Canada. Individuals were recruited that represented diverse ethnicities and low SES. The authors hypothesized that “a lower AE would be associated with lower physical activity levels and poorer physical and mental health.” Validated measurement tools were used to assess the participant’s AE, physical activity, as well as physical and mental health.

Results indicated that those with better AE had higher levels of social functioning, energy and vitality. In addition, those with better AE scores also had higher levels of physical activity. Study participants who lived in lower income housing, as opposed to individual homes, were more likely to have lower AE and poor mental health. Investigators concluded that AE is strongly associated with mental health, self-rated health, and physical activity in a sample of low SES and ethnically diverse older adults.

**Reference:**

#### Promoting the Congregate Meal Program to the Next Generation of Rural-Residing Older Adults

**Jody L Vogelzang, PhD, RDN, FAND, CHES**

Participation in congregate meal programs (CMP) has been steadily decreasing nationwide. This article used qualitative research to evaluate perceptions of CMP, preferred wellness program characteristics, and the desires of older adults who are not participating in the CMP due to age ineligibility or lack of interest. Iowans aged 45 years or above were recruited to participate in a single two-hour focus group. A convenience sample of 27 participants (average age of 62.5 years) took part in the focus groups. Participants were predominantly white, rural-residing and college-educated.

Responses indicated that congregate meals were thought of as being for low-income older people, serving “bad” food, and were unwelcoming to outsiders. One respondent believed that when you start participating in programs designed for older adults, you are one step closer to a nursing home. Respondents reported that inclusion of an educational session or exercise program in addition to a meal would be preferable.

Suggestions for improving congregate meals included better program promotion, and using intergenerational activities. Some participants thought evening meals would be better accepted than lunchtime meals.

As the population of those eligible for congregate meals increases, improving the perception and satisfaction of CMP is vital.

**Reference:**
Western Region Public Health Training Center

In January 2016, the PHCNPG Executive Committee approved a new appointed position. The Education Coordinator will serve as a member of the Executive Committee and will be responsible for developing and organizing education opportunities for members.

The Education Committee Chair for the 2016-2018 term is Leslye Rauth, MPH, RD, CDE. If you are interested in serving as part of the Education Committee or have ideas for Leslye, please feel free to email her at leslye.rauth@ihs.gov.

The Western Region Public Health Training Center

The Western Region Public Health Training Center (WRPHTC), located in the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health in Tucson, AZ, provides a variety of training opportunities for registered dietitians working in public health and community nutrition. The WRPHTC represents Region IX of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which encompasses Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the U.S. Associated Pacific Islands. The WRPHTC specifically works to provide expertise on nutrition, physical activity, and obesity to the National Public Health Learning Network that includes 10 regional public health training centers and a coordinating center.

The Education Committee Chair for the 2016-2018 term is Leslye Rauth, MPH, RD, CDE. If you are interested in serving as part of the Education Committee or have ideas for Leslye, please feel free to email her at leslye.rauth@ihs.gov.

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The WRPHTC provides competency-driven continuing education in the form of webinars, online short courses, and in-person trainings. The WRPHTC is a Continuing Professional Education Accredited Provider with the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The following is a sampling of their popular self-paced online trainings, available nationwide, offered free of charge, and approved for Continuing Professional Education Units (CPEU):

- Motivational Interviewing (0.5 CPEU)
- Best Practices in Program Planning for Localized Obesity Prevention (1.0 CPEU)
- Improving Community Food Security Through Community and School Gardens (1.0 CPEU)
- Tools and Approaches to Optimizing Nutrition Education (0.5 CPEU)

The WRPHTC is also hosting a live webinar series on Successful Nutrition Programs for Native American and Pacific Islander Communities. The final session will be

- December 13, 2016, Tohono O'odham Nation and Pasqua Yaqui Diabetes Program by Dolores Addison, MPH, RD

Previous sessions were recorded and are available online at the WRPHTC website.

Please visit: http://wrphtc.arizona.edu/ and https://www.facebook.com/arizonaPHTC.

Message from the Chair:

Thank you to all who attended FNCE® and helped support our Spotlight session. Ruth Lindberg, MPH, MUP, and Jessica Donze Black, MPH, RD, presented “Growing the Youngest Generation: Health Impact Assessment of Child Care Meals.” The purpose and process of Health Impact Assessments (HIA) were presented following by specific methods and results of the HIA new meal patterns required by the Child and Adult Care Program. Key findings of the HIA included:

1. Increased whole grain and vegetable intake, and decreased consumption of grain-based desserts, which will likely have a positive impact on the nutritional quality of foods;
2. Strategies including nutrition education, training, and technical assistance, and more nutrient-dense offerings may positively impact attitudes toward healthy foods; and
3. Meal pattern changes may result in a minor increase in provider costs related to serving healthier foods, resulting in a potential decrease in provider participation.

Many Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) providers and consultants attended the session.

The Member Showcase allowed FNCE® attendees to find out about the practice of public health and community nutrition thanks to our volunteers Kayla Fitzgerald, Alicia Grove, Judy Vogelzang, Tatyana El-Kour, and Leslye Rauth.

A member reception was held at District Hall on the Boston waterfront. Those in attendance used Open Space Technology to have discourse on several topics in addition to informal networking. There were several conversation groups led by members Patrick Berner, who is a practicing physical therapist, and identified barriers to collaborative education and training programs among health disciplines; Judy Klawes-Giunta distinguished processes to best assist members in commenting on regulatory and policy initiatives; Alicia Groves discovered that students want more scholarships available, even if dollar amounts are decreased; and José Wendel listened to ideas on how to get health equity into all public health programs. These conversations will influence how Board members carry out activities that are most helpful to members.

Our annual face-to-face Board meeting held on Saturday resulted in several decisions regarding managing information flow to members through our website and e-blasts. To that end, Electronics Communications Coordinator, Marielle Counts, will begin consolidating messages to members and send a weekly email with the week's news and action items. We hope this reduced number of messages will help you manage your email communications.

We continue to redesign our website with responsive design elements, meaning the user interface on mobile devices will be much improved. Our redesigned webpage will be able to track and create CEU certificates for members who complete webinar and Digest CEUs – that’s right, we will begin to offer CEU articles through The Digest! Launch of our improved functioning website is planned for Spring of 2017.

~ Kay Dutram, Chair
The 2016 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ (FNCE®), the annual meeting of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, was held October 15-18, 2016 in Boston, MA. Here are highlights from PHCNPH at FNCE®!

**PHCNPG Annual Planning Meeting**
Before FNCE® even started, your PHCNPG Executive Committee was hard at work planning for the upcoming year. Some of the activities on the agenda included the Second Century report and discussion of how we will showcase the Second Century in 2017, updates on our upcoming website redesign, Continuing Education topics and platforms, and future partnerships and collaborations.

**Support for Breastfeeding Mothers at FNCE®**
PHCNPG and the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics proudly sponsored the Mothers Room at the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ (FNCE®) 2016. The Mothers Room provides a quiet, private place for breastfeeding mothers to nurse their infants or pump breast milk while attending FNCE®. Since it started in 1991, the service has expanded to feature individual private spaces, a breast pump holding area, supplies, refreshments, and a refrigerator and freezer to store expressed milk. Special thanks to Lauren Melnick, past Chair of the PHCNPG, for her efforts to organize the space, and volunteers in order to offer this feature at the annual FNCE® meeting.

**DPG/MIG Showcase**
Thanks to all of our current members who stopped by to say hello or those who came looking for opportunities to get more involved. PHCNPG members can get involved by volunteering on a committee, such as the Communications Committee and Continuing Education Committee among others. Thank you to our volunteers Kayla Fitzgerald, Tatyana El-Kour, Alicia Grove, and Judy Klavens-Giunta for devoting their time to interacting with our members.
PHCNPG Networking Meeting
Nearly 50 members attended the PHCNPHG Networking Meeting on Sunday evening at District Hall located along the Boston Waterfront. Members in attendance participated in guided and informal networking with fellow PHCNPG members.

Members of the Student Committee at the PHCNPG Member Reception.

Recipients of DPG Awards were Recognized at the Reception
Read about each award winner on pages 8-9.

Left to right: Kay Dutram and Karen Ehrens.

Left to right: Kay Dutram and Nate Stritzinger.
Excellence in Public Health Award – Karen Ehrens

Karen Ehrens works by contract with the North Dakota Department of Health. She serves as the Coordinator of Healthy North Dakota, a prevention initiative to support North Dakotans to improve physical, mental, and emotional health for all by building innovative statewide partnerships. Part of this work includes identifying and filling gaps in prevention networks. Another aspect of this work includes facilitating integration among prevention groups, or to put it more simply, helping to connect work across silos. Karen has made a commitment to advance health equity and raise awareness about health inequities in North Dakota.

Another part of Karen’s work is coordinating the Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Coalition. This coalition works to raise awareness about food insecurity and hunger in the state, connect organizations to work together when possible and learn from one another, and reduce duplication of effort. Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Coalition is looking upstream to reduce root causes of hunger, which include inadequate resources and education. A new venture for Karen in 2016 is running for the North Dakota legislature as a candidate for the House of Representatives in District 32 in Bismarck.

Karen was born in Minot, North Dakota, and graduated with a degree in food and nutrition from North Dakota State University. She completed her internship in dietetics at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, San Diego. She also completed an internship in the office of then U.S. Representative Byron Dorgan’s office in Washington, D.C. prior to beginning her dietetic practice.

Karen started her dietetic career working in a hospital, and observed that patients were often too sick to absorb the nutrition education she provided. With strong feelings and experience that preventing disease was more effective than trying to treat it once in place, Karen moved on to work in the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Child Nutrition Programs in the mid-1990’s, when early nutrition standards were offered to improve school meals. She presented a testimony on behalf of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) before the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee in 2009 in a hearing titled, Beyond Federal School Meals Programs: Reforming Nutrition for Kids in Schools. This was in the time leading up to the development and passage of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act.

Karen appreciates learning from the vast experience of members and leaders in the PHCNPG. She has volunteered in her state Academy affiliate, and served as the state legislative coordinator. One issue which Karen worked persistently on was the recognition for mothers to breastfeed anywhere in public. North Dakota was one of fewer than 10 states without this legislation in place, and it took attempts over four legislative sessions to pass.

Karen chaired the Academy Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC) in 2014, and was a member of the committee from 2011-2015. During her time on the committee, the LPPC guided establishment of Academy priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill, while Karen was chair of the Farm Bill work group. The establishment of these priorities allowed the Academy to join with other nutrition and anti-hunger groups in advocating for priorities, including nutrition safety net programs, maintaining funding for SNAP nutrition education, funding for nutrition research support for fruit and vegetable farming and nutrition programs, and supporting sustainable farm practices and policies for beginning farmers.

In her free time, Karen likes walking with her dog and family in all seasons. She enjoys spending time together with her daughter, who is just starting college. Together with her husband Duane, a chef at St. Alexius Medical Center, the couple teaches cooking classes including “Mediterranean on the Prairie,” and various farmers market classes and cooking demonstrations. Karen finds peace and a change of focus when she works in flower and vegetable gardens in her own yard, and in community gardens across Bismarck.

2016 Outstanding Member of the Year

Dr. Meg Bruening is an assistant professor in the School of Nutrition and Health Promotion at Arizona State University, one of the largest dietetics programs in the U.S. She is currently in her fifth year in the position, where she teaches community nutrition and conducts public health nutrition research. Dr. Bruening works as a prevention scientist to address the social and environmental determinants of healthy eating among underserved young people, intertwining social epidemiology with community-engaged research.

She came to Arizona in order to work on issues related to food insecurity and food access, and has been working on community-based participatory research with middle school youth and college students. A few years ago, Dr. Bruening was fortunate to receive an Early Independence Award from the National Institutes of Health to examine the mechanisms by which friendship networks impact eating, physical activity, and weight outcomes among young people. She has a number of school-based projects examining how school meal programs impact eating and health outcomes. Dr. Bruening aims to conduct research that directly (or indirectly) informs policy in order to address health equity and social determinants of health for low-income, under-resourced youth and their families.

Dr. Bruening was born in a small rural town in Iowa, and moved to Pennsylvania when she was in elementary school. She completed her undergraduate degree at Penn State with a BS in Nutritional Sciences and a minor in International Agriculture – hoping at the time to focus her work internationally. Living in the same town in which she went to college, Dr. Bruening spent every opportunity abroad to strengthen her skills for international work. She completed her internship at Iowa State University with her rotations in Waterloo, IA. After her internship, Dr. Bruening worked as a program coordinator for the Penn State International Agricultural Study Abroad Program in Moscow, Russia. When she returned to the U.S., Dr. Bruening became a Women, Infants, and Children(WIC) dietitian in Philadelphia, and later, the nutritionist for the Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network, which was then housed in the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center. These experiences opened her eyes to domestic needs and helped her to connect policy and systems to positive health behavior change. After four years of
working as a community and public health dietitian, Dr. Bruening moved to Minnesota to pursue her Master of Public Health (MPH) in nutrition, and then a doctoral degree in nutritional sciences with a public health emphasis. She had the fortune of working with amazing researchers like Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Mary Story, and Jamie Stang who provided her with a foundation for the work she is doing now.

Dr. Bruening loves public health nutrition and the Public Health Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG). She served as Chair and leader to the Public Health and Community Nutrition (PHCN) Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance (SOP/SOPP). This amazing team consisted of public health and dietetics leaders throughout the country who worked for over two years to create the SOP/SOPP. As public health and community dietitian nutritionists, we have a unique voice on how we approach dietetics, and our area of the field is ripe for rapid growth. We hope that the PHCN SOP/SOPP provides a competency guide for professional growth among PHCN members, as well as a better understanding among non-PHCN members on what our work looks like. This document requires revision every five years, so if you have feedback, please feel free to send it to her!

Dr. Bruening is a volunteer-aholic and loves to be engaged in activities in which she can contribute to make an impact. She has been very active as an Academy member, serving on the Child Nutrition Reauthorization taskforce, the Future of Food Initiative, HOD Food Security Task Force, as HOD Delegate for the Hunger and Environmental Nutrition DPG, on the Sustainable, Resilient, Healthy Food and Water Systems Standards of Professional Performance paper, and as the Public Policy Coordinator for Minnesota, among other activities.

Aside from her work and volunteering, Dr. Bruening loves to hike, camp, and travel to explore new and interesting foods and drinks.

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**2016 Outstanding Student Member of the Year**

**Nate Stritzinger** is a student in the combined Masters of Public Health/Registered Dietitian (MPH/RD) program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has been an active member of the Public Health Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) for three years, after discovering the field of public health. This year he has taken more active roles in the committee and joined the PHCNPG Student Committee, where he serves on two project subcommittees.

After completion of his undergraduate studies in Sociology at Ithaca College in upstate NY, with minors in French and Environmental Studies, he was awarded a Semester at Sea opportunity, where he circumnavigated the globe, traveling to 12 countries. Along the way, he was able to volunteer with a non-profit in South Africa that was tasked with ameliorating malnutrition and poverty in the townships outside of Cape Town. This eye-opening experience cultivated his interests in food justice, food access and food insecurity, and ultimately led him to pursue a Master’s degree in public health and nutrition.

Nate’s passion for nutrition advocacy has led him to many rich and rewarding experiences. As an intern at the Durham County Department of Public Health, he worked on efforts focused on policy, system, and environmental change within the community. Additional efforts have included participation in such projects as assisting a doctoral student with qualitative research on local food policy councils, work on Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) policy analysis at the Global Food Research Program at the Carolina Population Center, and as a program and development intern at Philabundance, Philadelphia’s largest hunger-relief organization.

Leadership roles have included service as a delegate for the American Mock World Health Organization, Food Day chair and treasurer on behalf of the Nutrition Coalition, and as fundraising co-chair for the 37th annual Minority Health Conference, the largest and longest-running student-led health conference in the nation. His work continues to raise awareness about health disparities, advocate for effective nutrition policies, and mobilize the community to take action.

All of these roles will serve him well as he advances towards his culminating rotation with the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) in Washington, D.C., where he will continue to impact lives through effective nutrition policy and program development.

Following completion of his graduate coursework he is hoping to serve his community as a public health dietitian or perhaps a public policy analyst, and is looking forward to the mentorship program within the practice group to help guide him both personally and professionally towards these goals.

In his spare time, he enjoys cooking, running, playing tennis, hiking and traveling. His adventurous spirit always has him up for exploring new places close to home and far away.

The PHCNPG Student committee is very proud of all of Nate’s hard work. On behalf of our practice group, profession, and community: Congratulations!
Call for 2017 Award Nominations

It is time to recognize outstanding Public Health Nutritionists! The Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) Award’s Committee is looking for nominations for both Academy and PHCNPG Awards.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Awards
The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a number of awards. Following is information on some of these:

- **Lenna Frances Cooper Lecture**: Honors an Academy member who has been recognized as a notable and inspiring speaker.
- **Marjorie Hulsizer Copher Award**: The highest honor the Academy bestows on one of its members for contributions to the Academy through extensive, active participation and service at all levels of the association.
- **Medallion Award**: Honors Academy members who have shown dedication to the high standards of the dietetics profession through active participation, leadership, and devotion to serving others in dietetics and allied health fields.
- **Excellence in Practice Awards**: Recognizing outstanding registered dietitians and dietetic technicians, registered, who have demonstrated innovation, creativity, and leadership in a specific area of practice.

Information on the Academy Awards and the nomination process is at http://www.eatright.org/nationalawards/. Deadlines have not yet been released by the Academy, but we will follow last year’s timeframe:

- “Intent to Nominate” must be submitted by midnight CST on January 15, 2017.
- The completed award packet is due by midnight CST on March 1, 2017.

For the PHCNPG to consider a nomination for an Academy award, submit a request including the type of honor or award, name, and contact information of the candidate, and a brief summary supporting the nomination by January 9, 2017. Please send the information to Brittney.sly@colostate.edu.

Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group Awards
The Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group has four awards, which include:

- **Outstanding Member of the Year Award**
- **Outstanding Young Member of the Year Award**
- **Outstanding Student Member of the Year Award**
- **Excellence in Public Health/Community Nutrition Award**

Please send the completed nomination form to Brittney Sly, MPH, RDN, at Brittney.sly@colostate.edu by April 3, 2017. Award information can be found at http://www.phcnpg.org/.

If you have any questions, please contact Brittney Sly at Brittney.sly@colostate.edu.

A Message from the Student Committee Chair

Submitted by Alicia Grove, BA, PHCNPG Student Committee Chair phcnpgstudents@gmail.com, phcnpgstudents@gmail.com

Hello Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group Members! Our 2016-2017 is off to a great start with the fall issue of The Student Digest and our monthly student Facebook group “Ask the RDN” chats. The chats have given students an opportunity to connect to public health nutrition professionals and learn more about different career options. If you have ideas for future “Ask the RDN” chats, please let me know.

We are excited to have connected mentors and student mentees through our mentorship program. Our program seeks to connect members who are experienced nutrition professionals with students and interns, with the aim to promote growth in specialty practice areas, general career, and personal growth. Our student committee is always looking for more mentors and mentees, and we are focusing on connecting people in a similar geographic location or career interests.

We are happy to share that our student membership survey is compiled and will be sent out. Please look for the survey in your inbox and complete it to share your feedback with us so we can improve your experiences. You also have the chance to win a free

PHCNPG membership next year. The student committee will be starting to work on our winter issue of The Student Digest very soon and if you are interested in contributing to it, please contact me. Our current and ongoing projects are providing more support for our mentoring program, creating nutrition related policy projects, and developing a resource for new RDNs to find public health/community nutrition jobs.

I was excited to meet many student members of this practice group at FNCE® this year, and am thrilled that we have many new student members after FNCE®. Thanks for coming to the Membership Booth at FNCE® to learn more about us. I would also like to thank the Student Committee members that volunteered with PHCNPG activities at FNCE®. It was truly a pleasure to meet all of you in person, and your support for this practice group is appreciated. We encourage students to join our student committee to become more involved. Email me if you have any questions or comments on matters dealing with students. I would love to hear from you!
Megan Fallon, MS
Megan Fallon is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island (URI) where she received a master’s degree in Nutrition and Food Sciences in May 2016. She will begin her dietetic internship with Sodexo in January of 2017, where she will concentrate on leadership in dietetics.

During her undergraduate studies, Megan volunteered with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) in Providence, Rhode Island. The SNAP-Ed program provides nutrition education to low-income Americans, and Megan observed firsthand how some populations are disproportionately affected by chronic disease. Working closely with community dietitians and teaching nutrition programs to people of all ages and income levels across the state, Megan developed a passion for community nutrition and for providing nutrition education to those with limited education and resources.

Megan’s experiences with SNAP-Ed motivated her to study health behaviors of underserved populations in Rhode Island. While working as an Undergraduate Research Assistant transcribing semi-structured interviews of participants of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), Megan became interested in research and how it can inform nutrition policies that influence health inequities. She continued her newfound passion for research by pursuing a master’s degree with Dr. Alison Tovar in her Community Nutrition and Childhood Obesity Prevention lab at URI.

As part of her thesis, Megan explored the feeding practices of Rhode Island Head Start teachers to determine whether observed feeding practices are different than those self-reported on a questionnaire. Examining the feeding practices of child care teachers is important, as Head Start teachers in particular serve low-income and ethnically diverse children who are disproportionately impacted by obesity. Megan observed that feeding practices encouraged by Head Start policies (i.e. avoidance of food as a reward or to control a child’s emotion) often explained a strong agreement between self-reported and observed feeding practices. In other words, the frequency of these coded practices by the researcher was similar to what was self-reported by the teacher. However, other feeding practices highly encouraged by the literature (e.g., role modeling, praising a child for trying new foods) did not strongly agree in frequency across measures. Megan hopes to publish this work to highlight the need for refined measures that more accurately capture feeding practices within child care settings. Her findings also indicate the need for a validated, standardized protocol for mealtime observations.

Megan is eager to begin her dietetic internship with Sodexo, where she will apply her foundational nutrition knowledge to the clinical realm of dietetics. She will concentrate her internship rotations on leadership opportunities, as she believes leadership experience is critical for newly emerging dietitians in education, research, advocacy, and public policy. After completing the internship, Megan’s short-term plans are to work as a clinical dietitian to gain more experience with individual-based care. In the long-term, she hopes to find a career that integrates nutrition research with policy. As a dietitian, Megan hopes to improve the health of families, especially among the underserved.

Jocceline Hernandez, MS, RD
Jocceline Hernandez is the Registered Dietitian for the Student Medical Services division at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the nation’s second largest school district. She receives referrals from doctors, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants, if nutrition-related concerns are identified through physical exam. School nurses from all LAUSD schools (K-12) also refer students and their families to the nearest school-based clinic in their area to receive nutrition consultations.

Through these referrals, Jocceline coordinates a time and day to be present at one of the 14 school-based clinics in the district, and contacts the student’s legal guardian to schedule a one-on-one nutrition consultation to address the nutrition issue. During the consultation, both guardian and student participate to identify areas of improvement to enhance their nutritional wellbeing, and leave the session with three or four goals the child has agreed to fulfill to establish a healthier lifestyle, with their family’s support.

Jocceline has identified some challenges that may keep students from utilizing the nutrition services. Many students enter the school district from other countries, and they are given a list of all school-based clinics in the district that provide a school entry physical exam. The clinic may not always be near the home school they are assigned to, and parents must then travel a long distance should they return for nutrition services. Additionally, when parents bring in their child for nutrition consultations, the child may miss school for the appointment, and the parent must request time off from work. Another challenge is that some parents and students are just unable to keep their appointments. Jocceline has found that the biggest turnout for nutrition services comes from high school students, often because they can attend their nutrition consultation during elective classes.

During the 2015-2016 school year, Jocceline feels that she was able to address some of the challenges and reach many more students by initiating a collaboration with parent center representatives to schedule nutrition workshops, reaching more students and increasing awareness of the nutrition-related services offered at the school-based clinics. Parents are also able to schedule an individual session with their child. Additionally during this past school year, Jocceline worked to build partnerships with other organizations and grant-funded programs. For example, the “Choose Health LA Kids” obesity prevention grant funded by the Department of Public Health and coordinated by Northeast Valley Health Corporation, provides grocery store tours, foods demos, nutrition lessons, and resource access to the parent centers. Moreover, the Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA), a non-profit organization that “works to end hunger and promote healthy eating through advocacy, direct service, and organizing,”
brings awareness of SNAP benefit use at the local farmers markets in the neighborhoods where workshops are held.

Jocceline looks forward to continuing to implement previously successful approaches in 2016-2017 school year, and increasing partnerships with other organizations to reach more parents. Through the support of a grant from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Fit4LA program, two clinics will be used as a pilot to implement video conferencing nutrition services (Teledietitian) using an iPad. This will allow parents and their child to connect with Jocceline using a video conferencing application. By utilizing this service, Jocceline hopes to increase participation rates and eliminate the need to schedule a nutrition session at a later date. Once a referral is made, teledietitian services will provide flexibility and timeliness of services.

Rebecca Russell, MPH, RD
Rebecca Russell is the Community Wellness Director with Adventist Health – Central Valley Network based in Kings County, CA. Kings County is located within a congressional district that is ranked 436 out of 436 in the Measure of America: Geographies of Opportunity rankings. This measure ranks well – being by congressional districts based on health, access to knowledge, and living standards. Kings County’s ranking indicates residents have multiple health issues. For example, it is estimated that 48% of Kings County has prediabetes, and more than 35,000 people are estimated to be obese. Additionally, the Central Valley has the highest smoking rate in California at over 16%.

To address such issues, Rebecca’s department within Adventist Health, aims to “create healthier communities through education and outreach.” Rebecca works with the interdisciplinary teams to improve care for patients at all points of contact, including inpatient, outpatient, and community services. The goal is to ensure consistency and continuity of care through all touch points. As an outreach dietitian, Rebecca’s goal is to create multiple resources so that people can choose their own path to wellness. Some people need nutrition interventions, while others need physical activity, or smoking cessation and lung health resources. Rebecca develops opportunities to help anyone find their own path when they are ready to make lifestyle changes.

A major part of Rebecca’s job is working in the community. She teaches regular nutrition and wellness classes to a variety of groups in the community, in addition to working with community coalitions. For example, Rebecca works with the Kings Partnership for Prevention and the Kings County Diabesity Coalition (for which she currently serves as chair), to coordinate nutrition and wellness messages, resources, and activities to better target and impact the community. A new coalition that Rebecca is currently assisting to develop is the Whole Person Care Pilot – Kings County Coalition, which involves multiple community partners (such as the hospital, Kings County Public Health department, local MediCal Health plans, law enforcement, and local organizations) to target behavioral health, substance abuse, and homelessness in Kings County.

One of Rebecca’s big goals in Kings County is to bring necessary resources to the community. In 2016, through a new partnership with the American Lung Association, Rebecca’s team brought the first Better Breather’s Club to Kings County, the first annual respiratory rally to connect those suffering from chronic lung diseases with resources and education on current research and treatments. On May 31, 2016, Rebecca taught the only smoking cessation class offered in Kings County – Freedom From Smoking®.

Regarding her outreach efforts, Rebecca says “I have found that the community is so happy to see that the hospital has someone like me working outside of the walls of our campus, going to where the people are, and helping them improve their health and lives. Community partners welcome me into their organizations, invite me to their programs and to meet with their participants. Every presentation I give usually leads to two or three more!” One of Rebecca’s largest roles is ensuring coordination of all activities and confirming all activities are meaningful and lend themselves to the department’s purpose and goals. Rebecca expresses “Wellness is such a huge field and it is easy to try to do too much and end up not doing enough.”
Noereem Z. Mena, MS, RDN, LD
Noereem Mena is a doctoral student in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Rhode Island (URI). She currently works in the office of the Community Nutrition and Childhood Obesity Prevention Research Group under the supervision of Dr. Alison Tovar. This research group is dedicated to preventing childhood obesity across multiple environments. Noereem has been working with Dr. Tovar since the fall of 2012, where she completed the Combined Master of Science Dietetic Internship (MSDI) program. Since then, she has been cultivating her doctoral dissertation which focuses on the way provider and parent feeding practices within the child care and home environment influence young children’s dietary behaviors.

As part of the MSDI program, she completed her master’s thesis where she conducted focus groups with Hispanic parents of preschool-aged children enrolled in child care. The goal of her thesis was to identify cultural and contextual influences on parental feeding practices among this target group. Her published findings highlighted that feeding practices employed by this group of Hispanic mothers were influenced by parent childhood mealtime experiences, their spouse, other family members, and foods their children were exposed to in child care.

After completing her master’s degree and successfully passing the National Registration Examination for Dietitians test, Noereem continued her research efforts and began her doctoral program in the summer of 2014, also becoming a student investigator on the Healthy Start/Comienzos Sanos project at Brown University’s School of Public Health. This project seeks to improve the nutrition and physical activity environments of home-based child care in RI.

While working on this project, Noereem submitted, and was awarded, a supplemental diversity grant proposal under Healthy Start, to further support the understanding of feeding practices across the child care and home environment. This supplement provides tuition and stipend support for Noereem to complete her doctoral training. The goal of her research project is to develop standardized communication between parents and child care providers regarding best feeding practices to support healthy dietary behaviors.

Recently, Noereem has also become interested in how federal policies, like child nutrition programs, can influence child care environments. To gain more experience in nutrition policy, Noereem recently took on the position as the Public Policy Coordinator for the Rhode Island Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. In this position, she will disseminate information on policy and legislative activities related to the interests and mission of the Academy. This position will allow her to continue to stay abreast on nutrition policies that influence the community’s health.

Noereem’s experiences in these projects continue to support her graduate program goals and career interests. She is expected to graduate in the Spring of 2018, and upon completing her doctoral program, she intends to pursue a career in the field of public health nutrition, where she will focus her efforts on nutrition policies that promote healthy behaviors in young children.

Thank You!

THANK YOU to the following PHCNPG members who serve on the Communication Committee’s Newsletter Team and contributed as writers, editorial staff, and review board members for this issue of The Digest.

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Jordan Holland, RD, MPH, CPH
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Special thanks to the following members of the PHCNPG Student Committee who reviewed the 2016 Award winner articles.

Alicia Grove, BA
Stella Yan, BS
Elizabeth Douglass, BS

If you are interested in joining the newsletter team for the 2016-2017 membership year, contact Brigette Grimes (newsletter editor) and Kathleen Cullinen (associate newsletter editor) at phcnpg.communications@gmail.com, and include “Newsletter” in the subject line.
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**Public Health/Community Nutrition**

a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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