

Visioning Report 2017: A Preferred Path Forward for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession

Introduction:

One of the functions of the Council on Future Practice (CFP) is to ensure the viability and relevance of the profession of nutrition and dietetics by engaging in a visioning process to identify the preferred future of the profession. The outcomes of the 2014-2017 visioning process will help to inform the Academy and its organizational units for moving the profession forward in the next 10-15 years. Summarized below are the Change Drivers, Trends, and Recommendations from the Council’s 2017 Visioning Report.

Ten Priority Change Drivers and their Associated Trends for the CFP’s 2014-2017 Visioning Cycle:

Change Drivers	Associated Trends
Aging Population Dramatically Impacts Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing rates of obesity and chronic diseases among older adults dramatically impact the health care system and the economic burden of disease. • Demand for health care services is increasing dramatically although fewer funds are available to cover the cost. • Disease prevention and health maintenance for the aging population are increasingly the focus to improve quality of life and care and contain costs. • An aging workforce impacts the economy, businesses, families and health professions.
Embracing America’s Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community health workers and other lay educators will continue to be used to reduce health disparities and as a solution to the lack of diversity in the health care workforce. • As the U.S. population grows more diverse, stark differences between what health providers intend to convey in written and oral communications and what patients understand may increase and further exacerbate health disparities. • Health equity is an increasingly important public health priority because of evolving U.S. racial and ethnic demographics.
Consumer Awareness of Food Choice Ramifications Increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural challenges and rapidly changing technology present entrepreneurial opportunities as food companies seek innovative ways to meet consumer demand for healthy foods and demonstrate their social responsibility. • Siloed approaches to agriculture, health, sustainability, and economics are being abandoned for transdisciplinary solutions to reduce hunger, poverty, disease, and environmental destruction. • There is a growing interdependence of countries around the world in sustaining the planet’s national resources. • Consumers demand increasing levels of food transparency to meet their health, social justice, and environmental stewardship aspirations.
Tailored Healthcare to Fit my Genes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advances in research and increased demand for personalized health and nutrition result in increased availability and decreased costs of genetic testing.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals increasingly manage patient care using genetic profiles but the science of genetics must continue to advance to inform practice.
Accountability and Outcomes Documentation Become the Norm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care evolutions necessitate increased research and quality improvement activities. • The application of informatics facilitates and optimizes the retrieval, organization, storage and use of data and information for decision-making. • Practicing RDNs do not regularly evaluate and conduct research or access evidence-based resources for guidance in clinical practice.
Population Health and Health Promotion Become Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based and multifactorial interventions that access levels of influence at the policy, systems and environmental level of the social ecological framework are essential to address population health priorities. • Institutions, organizations and governments are increasingly striving for policy changes that are informed by research, help create a culture of health, and make healthy choices the easy choices. • The ACA paves the way for tremendous growth and unprecedented opportunities in workplace health promotion and disease prevention interventions. • Hospitals redefine their roles in the continuum of health care services and become immersed in the daily culture of the communities they serve.
Creating Collaborative-Ready Health Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transdisciplinary professionalism is becoming an essential ideology for a 21st century health care system. • IPE is an increasingly essential strategy for preparing the health care workforce for a patient-centered, coordinated and effective health care system. • A resurgence of interest in IPE has occurred with the goal of team-based care becoming the norm in health care. • Many difficulties and challenges exist to the successful implementation of IPE but innovative approaches can help overcome some of the challenges.
Food Becomes Medicine in the Continuum of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovations by food and nutrition-related industries are capitalizing on consumer’s growing passion for nutrition and health. • Unprecedented opportunities to lead preventive aspects of health arise from health care reform and emerging models of health care. • Nutrition and MNT are poised for primetime with the high prevalence of obesity and its related diseases.
Technological Obsolescence is Accelerating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative digital technologies personalize, revolutionize and increase access to health care. • Technological applications, economics and student demands disrupt traditional educational institutions. • Technological advances impact work settings and change how, when and where people work. • The digital age is transforming next generation food systems.

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<p>Simulations Stimulate Strong Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulations help address increased complexity of health care, higher patient acuity levels and patient safety. • Accountability of care, pay for performance and financial penalties for provider errors spur interest in simulations. • The use of simulations increases in response to cost-cutting in higher education and reduction in the availability of clinical placements for students. • The desire to improve critical thinking skills of learners drives the development and use of simulations.
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Recommendations:

Change Driver: Aging Population Dramatically Impacts Society

- The CFP recommends the Academy implement strategies to increase workforce capacity for the profession of nutrition and dietetics to address workforce projections, including the recommendations in the 2011 Dietetics Workforce Demand Study as well as ongoing workforce projections.
- The CFP recommends the Academy evaluate existing strategies (e.g., current online certificate of training programs in leadership and executive management, mentoring programs) to equip Academy members to fill leadership roles in key influential and visible positions in order to address workforce projections and positions vacated by retirees.

Change Driver: Embracing America’s Diversity

- The CFP supports the Academy’s Diversity Committee in its efforts to increase diversity within the profession as stated in objective #2 of the Diversity Strategic Plan: Objectives and Tactics 2015-2020: Build an effective program of community outreach to identify and attract students from groups traditionally underrepresented in the nutrition and dietetics profession (including race, ethnicity and gender).

Change Driver: Consumer Awareness of Food Choice Ramifications Increases

- The CFP supports the Academy’s Second Century initiative including the Nutrition Impact Summit and opportunity areas on increasing food resilience through the integration of nutrition expertise with local and global agricultural practices and food systems and on building capacity by expanding training in food systems throughout the continuum of education for nutrition and dietetics professionals.

Change Driver: Tailored Healthcare to Fit My Genes

- The CFP recommends the Center for Lifelong Learning collaborate with Dietetic Practice Groups and Member Interest Groups to create additional professional development opportunities related to the 10 change drivers from *Change Drivers and Trends Driving the Profession: A Prelude to the Visioning Report 2017*⁵ and develop additional on-line Certificate of Training Programs, which include integrated research modules, in emerging areas of practice to update and advance nutrition and dietetics-related knowledge and skills.
- The CFP supports ACEND in incorporating emerging areas of practice into standards and competencies of the curricula for nutrition and dietetics education programs.
- The CFP supports CDR in incorporating competencies related to emerging areas of practice into the Essential Practice Competencies for the CDR’s Credentialed Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners.

Change Driver: Accountability and Outcomes Documentation Become the Norm

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- The CFP recommends the Academy identify strategies to increase the number of doctoral-prepared RDN educators and practitioners to create a culture of research and evidence-based practice within the profession and address the 2024 graduate degree requirement for entry-level RDNs.
- The CFP recommends CDR require all credentialed dietetics practitioners to obtain continuing professional development in evaluation and documentation of nutrition- and fiscally-responsible outcomes tailored to their area of practice to demonstrate the value of the profession.
- The CFP supports the Academy's continuing efforts with the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration to include RDNs as essential health providers within the Bureaus of Health Workforce and Primary Health Care.

Change Driver: Population Health and Health Promotion Become Priorities

- The CFP recommends the Center for Lifelong Learning and the Committee for Public Health/Community Nutrition provide professional development opportunities for current nutrition and dietetics practitioners to increase their understanding and application of public health principles and population health to promote behavior change, extend their reach and influence policy for the optimal health of communities.

Change Driver: Creating Collaborative-Ready Health Professionals

- The CFP recommends the Academy continue to increase its visibility and influence in national efforts related to interprofessional education and practice and enhance innovative continuing professional development in this area in collaboration with other health care professionals to promote and advance the role of RDNs as essential health care providers.
- The CFP supports the Academy's, NDEP's and ACEND's advocacy work for inclusion of nutrition and dietetics practitioners in interprofessional education and practice, including ACEND's 2017 Standards for IPP as a core component of nutrition and dietetics education programs.

Change Driver: Food Becomes Medicine in the Continuum of Health

- The CFP recommends the Center for Lifelong Learning collaborate with Dietetic Practice Groups and Member Interest Groups to create additional professional development opportunities related to the 10 change drivers from *Change Drivers and Trends Driving the Profession: A Prelude to the Visioning Report 2017*⁵ and develop additional on-line Certificate of Training Programs, which include integrated research modules, in emerging areas of practice to update and advance nutrition and dietetics-related knowledge and skills.
- The CFP recommends the Academy promote collaboration among Dietetic Practice Groups and commit additional resources to position RDNs and other CDR credentialed practitioners, consistent with their scope of practice, as local and global leaders in the prevention, reduction, assessment, and management of malnutrition across all practice settings by increasing training in nutrition risk screening, including nutrition-focused physical examinations, and by influencing public policy, regulatory agencies and other health care practitioners.
- The CFP recommends the Academy develop a standing group of member experts to advise the Academy on controversial topics in an evidence-based and timely manner to increase the visibility and credibility of the Academy and promote the role of the RDN and NDTR.
- The CFP recommends the Academy take the lead in collaborating with other organizations and groups on the development of standards and qualifications for individuals working in wellness and health promotion/disease prevention programs to ensure delivery of evidence-based nutrition services by nutrition and dietetics professionals to better address nutrition-related health disparities.

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- The CFP supports ACEND in incorporating emerging areas of practice into standards and competencies of the curricula for nutrition and dietetics education programs.
- The CFP supports CDR in incorporating competencies related to emerging areas of practice into the Essential Practice Competencies for the CDR's Credentialed Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners.
- The CFP supports the Academy in its Second Century initiative to foster a culture of innovation throughout the Academy and profession commencing with the September 2016 Nutrition Impact Summit and forthcoming innovations projects; utilize innovative communications to increase member engagement in the Academy's mission and vision.

Change Driver: Technological Obsolescence is Accelerating

- The CFP recommends the Academy initiate pilots and generate outcomes data on the provision of nutrition services using technology (e.g., telehealth or telenutrition) and develop a framework (e.g., overcoming barriers, how to's, reimbursement, etc.) for practitioners utilizing this method of delivering nutrition services.

Change Driver: Simulations Stimulate Strong Skills

- The CFP recommends ACEND, NDEP and CDR work collaboratively to establish minimum standards and recommendations for evaluations of simulations for use with dietetics education programs and with current credentialed practitioners for continuing professional development; create, maintain and promote a simulations bank featuring simulations which meet the standards and are specific to different levels, areas of practice and scopes of practice.