Public Policy Workshop brings together Academy’s Policy Leaders

Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT) urges RDs to keep fighting for better food and nutrition programs

Ask anyone who attended and they will likely tell you that PPW 2012 was filled with some exciting moments! Nearly 400 registered dietitians and dietetic technicians, registered gathered in Washington D.C., to listen to advocacy experts, motivational speakers and educators, many of whom were RDs, describe how to advance the profession through the legislative process. Attendees also had the opportunity to discuss politics and network with colleagues. PPW 2012 mirrored last’s years PPW by offering two options for members as either “Beginners” or at an “Advanced” level of experience with public policy and advocacy strategies. PPW is the ‘one-stop shop’ for educational sessions and panel discussions on current issues such as the nutrition needs of the nation’s elderly (Older Americans Act), food insecurity and agriculture (Farm Bill), eliminating vitamin and mineral shortages and more. There was also a special session highlighting RDs in leadership roles who are making an impact in schools and communities across the nation alongside First Lady Michelle Obama in her Let’s Move! initiative. If you missed this year’s PPW, read more about it at http://www.eatright.org/ppw.

In addition to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack’s keynote appearance, one of the main spotlights of PPW 2012 was the annual ANDPAC reception. Guest speaker and 2012 Public Policy Leadership Award recipient, Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT), gave a compelling speech about how registered dietitians can advance nutrition, food and health legislation by educating their federal Representatives on the urgency of funding nutrition prevention programs that combat childhood obesity, reduce health disparities in low socio-economic communities and help lower the incidence of diabetes. Rep. DeLauro discussed her commitment to making America healthier by stating that she will continue to fight to ensure that all Americans have access to health care and nutritious foods. Rep DeLauro also shared real-life stories of how federal nutrition programs have helped many of her constituents. “I met with a WIC participant, a constituent, and she told me that she was very grateful of the WIC program because it had provided her with healthy foods to feed her family. It is these types of stories that keep me fighting; we need to reach every single one of my colleagues in Congress.” Rep. DeLauro concluded by applauding RDs for providing nutrition services in communities, schools and hospitals and for improving the health of the nation.

Rep. DeLauro was delighted to receive the 2012 Public Policy Leadership Award, stating that she was proud to be recognized by a group whose issues she values. Rep. DeLauro was nominated by members of the Connecticut Dietetic Association led by Public...
Policy Coordinator Melissa Castelluzzo, RD, CD-N.

“Rep. DeLauro is spot on,” stated ANDPAC Chair Marty Yadrick who attended the event. “Hearing these testimonials and learning advocacy skills at PPW give Academy members the skills and motivation that they need to encourage members of Congress to act swiftly on significant legislation. It is the responsibility of every RD and DTR to step up and advocate for the profession.”

To nominate your federal Representative(s) for the 2013 Public Policy Leadership Award, contact the Government Relations Office at govaffairs@eatright.org.

In summary, PPW once again showed that RDs not only play a role in the food, nutrition and health field, they also have so much to bring forth in advocacy and policy. Registered dietitians have the power to influence and advocate on behalf of the profession just by making an appointment to visit elected officials and share stories of how their work has improved the lives of a participant, client, patient, student, relative, or friend.

2012 Public Policy Leadership Award Recipients

Senator Al Franken (MN)
Affiliation: Minnesota Dietetic Association Public Policy Panel
Website: http://www.franken.senate.gov

Senator Debbie Stabenow (MI)
Affiliation: Michigan Dietetic Association Public Policy Panel
Website: http://www.stabenow.senate.gov

Representative Rosa DeLauro (CT)
Affiliation: Connecticut Dietetic Association Public Policy Panel
Website: http://delauro.house.gov

Representative Shelia Jackson Lee (TX)
Affiliation: Texas Dietetic Association Public Policy Panel
Website: http://jacksonlee.house.gov

“I can say we have been working with Rep. DeLauro for years and she has always been so supportive of our goals as an Academy. She always goes out of her way to really take the time to meet with CDA members and also to share these concerns with other members of Congress. She really is an extremely tireless champion of nutrition and we are so grateful that Rep. DeLauro won this award.”


ANDPAC raised nearly $18K at PPW

Your gift keeps ANDPAC listed as one of the most influential health professional PACs in the 2012 election

It is your contribution to ANDPAC that helps to increase the Academy’s visibility on Capitol Hill, raises the organization’s influence in political venues and boosts the power of the profession in the legislative process!

ANDPAC raised $17,513 at this year’s PPW thanks to ANDPAC supporters who believe in the Academy’s advocacy efforts on the Hill. It is your support that keeps the PAC recognized as one of the most influential health professional PACs on the Hill advocating for better nutrition and health based on a report provided by the Center for Responsive Politics www.opensecrets.org.

Campaign contributions to our champions, along with your commitment and advocacy, help to build rapport with federal legislators. The Academy establishes relationships with members of Congress and other health organizations by attending various fundraising events—contributing from $250 up to $10,000. Thus far, ANDPAC has contributed over $22,000 to members of Congress and Congressional and Senate candidates since the beginning of 2012. The next section lists Congressional members and candidates who were supported by the PAC in 2012.

ANDPAC continues to strive toward reaching its yearly goal of $150,000 in member contributions that are used to support nutrition champions and to help candidates get elected. In order to reach this goal, ANDPAC will start its annual FNCE campaign in August
and will send its annual Holiday communications to all members in November. You do not have to wait until August or November to start participating in the PAC! You can contribute now at [www.eatright.org/ANDPAC](http://www.eatright.org/ANDPAC). Or, to learn your recent contribution to ANDPAC and donor level, click [here](http://www.eatright.org/ANDPAC).

**ANDPAC Supporters Spotlight**

**Academy leader has personal connection to policy**

This issue features Academy Legislative Public Policy Committee and House of Delegate member Karen Bellesky, RD LDN.

**Why do you support ANDPAC?**

**Karen Bellesky:** I began contributing to ANDPAC in 2005 after learning how the PAC provided opportunities for the Academy to meet and educate Congressional members about RDs and DTRs. Unfortunately, many Congressional members often think that RDs and DTRs only focus on food, but dietetics professionals offer so much more! In 2005-2006, the Academy’s Policy Initiative and Advocacy staff worked diligently to assure that Medical Nutrition Therapy became a core service within the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act. This was vital to the profession. When this legislation passed, it allowed other health professionals to learn more about the role of RDs and DTRs, and the services that are provided by them. Since then, MNT is now handled as a direct patient care services such as medical case management, oral and mental health and substance abuse counseling, and not seen as support service with food.

Advocating for MNT was a tough fight for the Academy and a tough decision for legislators. Legislators had a difficult time in separating MNT from food, but what they didn’t realize that it was like separating medical case management from emergency financial assistance—both vital services. However, MNT was included as core nutrition services in the Ryan White Act! Just by simply contributing to the PAC.

**Have you always had an interest in public policy?**

**Karen Bellesky:** Yes! As I applied to my internship program in 1977; I was asked to write a personal statement on where I see myself in the future of dietetics. I remembered writing that at some point in my future I would love to be involved in nutrition and food policy and advocacy. Being a native of the nation’s capital, where politics is the steak of the city, I was always interested in how the U.S. government, especially, the federal government worked for the American people.

**Which legislative issues are most interesting to you? Anything nutrition related.**

**Karen Bellesky:** During PPW 2012, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack spoke and said the Farm Bill should really be called the “Food and Farm Bill.” I instantly became inspired to advocate more on the Farm Bill, as I already known that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) were funded through the Farm Bill.

However, I work for a Federally Qualified Health Center, and I coordinate many Ryan White grants, so I am particularly interested in all legislative actions towards the Affordable Health Care Act. For example, if the Supreme Court repeals this legislation, my organization and the patients I service will be negatively affected.

**Are you politically active in your home state of Maryland?**

**Karen Bellesky:** In the past three years, I have become more active in local delegates’ campaigns, as well as advocating for health care reform at the state level. As a Board member of the Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, I have participated in almost all of the Affiliate legislative days that allow members to get involve with policy and advocacy, visit the Capitol and discuss nutrition-related issues with state legislators.

**Have a story to tell?** If you are interested in being featured in future ANDPAC newsletters, please contact [cjones@eatright.org](mailto:cjones@eatright.org).
Senator Ben Cardin (MD) featured at Maryland Affiliate’s Annual Meeting

Senators notes RDs are cost beneficial and critical to war on obesity

ANDPAC partnered with the Maryland Dietetic Association to co-host an evening reception for Senator Benjamin Cardin (MD) in conjunction with the Maryland Dietetic Association annual meeting in April.

This reception allowed members to hear the latest news about nutrition, health and food legislation in Congress. The ANDPAC supported Sen. Cardin because of his effort to gain access to health insurance for all Americans, and increasing funding for prevention programs and health literacy in high-risk populations. He stated, “We are not where we need to be,” with 40 million uninsured Americans, increasing health care costs and preventive services not covered by many existing insurance companies.

Sen. Cardin acknowledged that promoting good health in order to prevent illness is crucial and says he fully supports RDs and the role they play in prevention. “RDs are critical on the front line in the war on obesity and disease prevention,” Cardin stated. Cardin implored all RDs to share their patients’ stories that tell how they are affected by health care issues with their elected officials so that members of Congress can ‘really’ understand that the problems with obesity, poor health and altered nutrition status will continue to progress unless immediate action is taken.

Sen. Cardin encouraged RDs to continue to be a role model in health care by providing America with the best nutrition and health services and by lobbying for medical nutrition coverage.

“Thank you” to the Maryland Dietetic Association for a great event that increased the visibility of the profession. If you would like to receive support from ANDPAC to attend or host an event, download the “ANDPAC Request” form here.

The ANDPAC Board of Directors would like Affiliate members and leaders to get involved with the PAC and help motivate members to attend local fundraisers, make small donations to the PAC and to ask questions about the Academy’s legislative efforts. Contact Charmaine Jones at cjones@eatright.org to learn more.

Contributions to Congressional Members and Candidates*

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*as of May 31, 2012

Please note: ANDPAC will continue to support legislators who value the Academy’s issues throughout the year. Review the ANDPAC contributions report at the Federal Election Commission website at www.fec.org or by contacting Jeanne Blankenship at jblankenship@eatright.org.
A New Section in the Voice!

Dispelling myths about ANDPAC

There is a great deal of misinformation out there about PACs in general. We hope to uncover the truth about PACs by providing you with accurate information on how they are a driving force that shapes and influences the political arena.

Myth #1: The only way to get involved in ANDPAC is to donate lots of money

FACT: Making a contribution of any amount, big or small, is perhaps the easiest way to get involved. If every member donated just $10 each year (think of it as three lattes from your favorite coffee shop), ANDPAC would be one of the largest health care professional PACs in the country, with receipts of $1.4 million per election cycle. There is no minimum required.

However, there are other ways to get involved that do not require a financial contribution. You can volunteer to speak about ANDPAC or staff an ANDPAC booth at your state or local dietetic association meeting. You can volunteer to attend a fundraiser, sponsored by ANDPAC, for your congressman or senators in your home town.

If you have a question that you would like ANDPAC to answer, send it to Charmaine Jones at cjones@eatright.org to be featured in the next newsletter.

Mark Your Calendar:

Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
October 6-9, 2012
Philadelphia, PA

Public Policy Workshop 2013
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
March 10-12, 2013
Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC

Popular Websites:

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee: www.eatright.org/ANDPAC

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org

Federal Election Commission: www.fec.gov

House of Representatives: www.house.gov

Senate: www.senate.gov

Library of Congress: www.thomas.loc.gov