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MDA

Fall 2009

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New Food Packages at WIC

Jaclyn Blitz

The Massachusetts Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program serves low-income families faced with many challenges to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Starting on October 1st, 2009, the WIC program will offer participants a greater variety of healthful options including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and baby foods. Changes are the result of an Institute of Medicine (IOM) review. Subsequent recommendations for major revisions to the food package were issued by IOM to address obesity and chronic disease risk in the population served by the program.

The new WIC food package will provide participants over the age two with fat free or 1% lowfat milk, unless otherwise medically indicated. This new requirement was established to help reduce the intake of saturated fat and cholesterol. Soy milk and tofu will remain a substitute for milk when participants have a milk protein allergy.



Other exciting changes to the food package include the addition of fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. Fruit and vegetable consumption will provide WIC participants with more vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Participants will also receive a voucher for corn or whole wheat tortillas, whole grain bread or brown rice. Taking into consideration current evidence regarding the benefits of whole grains, half the cereal selection will now be whole grain. Cereals will continue to be low in sugar and meet iron requirements for 100% of the Daily Value, but these whole grain selections will also provide more fiber.

In order to support a mother's desire to breastfeed, and to help mothers establish and maintain their milk supply, no routine issuance of infant formula will be provided to breastfed infants in their birth month. Packages for exclusively breastfeeding mothers are the largest and most varied, including the addition of a new salmon option. Although all infants will receive jarred baby food, fully breastfed infants will receive twice the number of jarred fruits and vegetables, as well as jarred meats come six months of age.

These changes to the WIC food package better allow for key nutrition messages to resonate with WIC families. By giving more access to fresh food choices, WIC can continue to help families form healthy habits, leading to healthier body weights and, ultimately, reduced risk for chronic disease.

Jaclyn is a student intern at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and graduate student attending Case Western Reserve University.

Newsletter Deadlines

Winter 2010 issue —
Topic Consideration deadline:
October 15th, 2009
Approved articles due by:
November 8th, 2009

Please send all submissions to
Carrie Taylor, Editor of *Today@MDA*,
at newsletter@eatrightma.org

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President's Message

It is an honor to be MDA President and I extend a special thanks to Inger Hustrulid, Pat Bebo and Peggy O'Shea for providing guidance and support throughout my elect year.

My primary goal for this coming year is to engage as many members as possible. I believe active participation in our professional organization is the only way to effectively and efficiently progress the dietetics profession.

Engaging membership will be done in a variety of ways. We started with the new formatting of *Today@MDA* to be more engaging. Thanks to Carrie Taylor, Director of Member Communications for spearheading this effort! We also created a new Membership Chair position on the Board of Directors. Janel Ovrut and her committee has hit the ground running with MDA presence on both Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as member networking events this summer such as berry picking and a movie night to see Julie & Julia. Join MDA on Facebook and LinkedIn or visit www.eatrightma.org for information about upcoming events.

We also have committees that could use your help. Yes you! If you have two hours or ten — it is my personal promise to find you a volunteer opportunity that fits your schedule and interests. There are opportunities on the membership, public policy, awards, and mentoring committees as well as the annual conference and Foundation. Contact me at president@eatrightma.org to learn more.

Also, please help me extend a warm welcome to our new Administrative Director Maureen Kelly Gonsalves, MEd, RD. She is responsible for administrative functions related to the daily business of the association, the Board of Directors and oversees the planning of the annual conference and exposition.

Of all the qualified candidates, Maureen's skill set, experience and management know-how most closely matched our needs. As an RD, Maureen has over 20 years of experience. She is currently the President and founder of Learn to be Well, an on-line wellness program. Previously, she held food service management positions in hospitals, schools and colleges. She has worked as a trainer for one of the leading nutrition software companies, has taught at local colleges and worked as a nutrition educator for the New England Dairy & Food Council. Maureen can be reached at admin@eatrightma.org or by phone at 617-501-7083.

I, as I am sure many of you are too, was saddened by the death of Senator Kennedy. A true champion for Medical Nutrition Therapy, healthcare reform, prevention and friend of MDA, we have lost a true advocate and champion. His years of tireless service and dedication are a true inspiration.

I hope that this is the year that YOU will decide to give back to our profession by volunteering, promoting the field of dietetics, and maybe advocating for comprehensive healthcare reform in honor of Senator Kennedy.

Vanessa Cavallaro, MS, RD, LDN

MDA Awards Update!

Outstanding Dietetics Educator Award nominations due to award chair by 1/1/2010. For nominations or questions, contact Awards Chair, Kimberly Mirsky, at kimberly_mirsky@yahoo.com.

More information available in the member section of www.eatrightma.org under *Scholarships and Awards*.

We Didn't Need Titles to be Leaders and Neither Do You: 2009 ADA Leadership Institute

Alison Books, MS, RD, LDN and Denise Conforti, MS, RD, LDN

After attending this year's ADA Leadership Institute, we are thrilled to share our favorite experiences with you. We hope they inspire, inform, and stimulate your lives as much as they have ours.

1. How to get more of what you want out of your colleagues, staff, committee, or organization? Incorporate more "appreciative leadership" into your work (website: www.gervasebushe.ca/).

It is easy to focus on the negative and miss the positive, but unfortunately, what we focus on is what we get. Use "appreciative leadership" to notice the potential that lays dormant within people and systems you work with and bring that potential to life. To use this technique:

- **Define what you want more of** (not what you want to "fix") in a person (such as listening, or assertiveness); in a group (such as decision making, or teamwork); or an organization (such as innovation, or customer orientation).
- **Assume what you want more of already exists.**
- **Search for instances to support what you want** more of and acknowledge it when you notice it. Use the phrase "I appreciate your ... (effort, ideas, or involvement)" instead of a simple "good job" to convey your awareness of someone's contribution.

2. How to say "no" and not feel guilty: Incorporate more "assertive communication" into your life (website: www.JettCT.com).

It is easy to take on too much at work or in life. Sometimes it may feel difficult to say "no" without feeling guilty, though, even when over-committed. Use "assertive communication" to be a team player while also protecting your time. For example, your supervisor asks you to stay late at work to finish a

The ADA Leadership Institute is an impressive program featuring cutting edge leadership principles and resources from dynamic expert speakers and facilitators. Participants experience a comprehensive set of skills that they may use to strengthen leadership performance, master change and advance the goals of the profession.

project when you have a prior commitment. Use the following four step model to say "no":

- **Acknowledge the request:** "I understand this is an important project."
- **Decline:** "I am not able to assist you." Do not say "I would like to help, but ..." because this phrase implies "yes." Instead:
- **Give reasons:** "I would be glad to help under normal circumstances but I have a prior engagement." Remember to keep reasons brief.
- **Suggest alternatives:** "However, I am glad to help you first thing in the morning and I will make it my first priority."

3. How to give yourself space for creativity, reflection, and growth: Create more "white space" in your life.

"White space" is the space between events on your daily calendar.

"White space" not only gives you personal growth time, but it also allows you to bring your most calm, confident, patient and present (CCPP) self to any interaction. In general, approximately 80-90% of the items on your calendar are necessary, leaving 10-20% for adjustments. Adjust your calendar by

using these strategies to create more "white space":

- Take unscheduled time every three hours.
- Plan on everything taking longer than you think.
- Ask yourself: What can I let go of? What can I turn down? (See #2 "How to Say No.")
- Breathe 10 times with soft eyes and jaw before turning on the car.

Workshops Cited:

1. "Appreciative Leadership," presented by Gervase Bushe
2. "Say it with Backbone, Not Bite," presented by Pamela Jett
3. "Overcommitted, Overwhelmed and Over It!" presented by Juliet Funt

Alison Books, MS, RD, LDN is the Director of Hunger & Nutrition at Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Boston (JF&CS). Denise Conforti, MS, RD, LDN is the Clinical Nutrition Manager and Dietetic Internship Director at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge.



Cranberries: An easy choice for better health

Pamela M. Nisevich, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

- Aah, cranberries. Whether you prefer an ice-cold glass of cranberry juice cocktail on a hot summer's night or fresh-from the oven cranberry scones on a cold winter morning, there's just something about the tart red berry that keeps you coming back for more. Did you know this functional fruit has a lot more to offer than just tantalizing tastes?

Homegrown, green, and healthy

As a dietetic professional in Massachusetts, it should come as no surprise that the native berry known as *Vaccinium macrocarpon* surrounds us. The United States produces over 400 million pounds of cranberries and Massachusetts is a major contributor; producing nearly 30% of the US crop^{1,2}. The Commonwealth harvests approximately 14,000 acres and devotes an additional 60,000 acres of supportive upland and wetland, used to provide open space, wildlife habitat and groundwater recharge.³

Whole Body Benefits

Cranberry's link to urinary health was established in the early 1900's when first anecdotal reports appeared. These were initially based on the theory that the berry's acidic properties led to improved urinary health. However, substantiated findings support that it's actually the phytochemicals in cranberries, known as a proanthocyanidins (PACs), that prohibit bacterial adhesion and proliferation (consequently improving urinary tract health).^{6,7}

continued on next page



It is thought that cranberry compounds may inhibit cancer cell growth by inducing the cells to die and reducing their ability to invade surrounding tissues.

The PACs found in cranberries are structurally different than those found in other plant foods. Its unique structure explains why, despite thorough testing, polyphenol-rich grape and apple juices, raisins, green tea and chocolate have been found not to produce the same anti-adhesion activity as cranberries.^{8,9}

Besides preventing urinary infections, cranberry PACs appear to inhibit dental caries and cancer.¹⁰⁻¹⁴ Cranberry components promote oral health as they inhibit acid production, attachment and biofilm formation by *Streptococcus mutans*, while effectively blocking the binding of bacteria to sites in saliva and glucans.¹⁰⁻¹¹ Concerning anti-cancer activities, results from laboratory studies show that polyphenolic extracts from cranberries inhibit the growth and proliferation of breast, colon, prostate, lung, and esophageal tumor cells.¹²⁻¹⁴ It is thought that cranberry compounds may inhibit cancer cell growth by inducing the cells to die and reducing their ability to invade surrounding tissues. In an analysis of the antioxidant phenol content of 20 fruits, cranberry was found to have the highest total phenol content.¹⁵

In summary, whether you are dishing up cranberries with turkey or snacking on dried cranberries while hiking on the trails, it's clear the ways to enjoy this native berry are as numerous as its potential benefits.

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Pamela is a nutrition consultant specializing in nutrition communications and sports nutrition. When not writing about food, nutrition, and overall wellness, she can be found working with athletes of all ages and abilities at www.swimbikeruneat.com.

Kicking Off the Year with the Massachusetts Student Dietetic Association

Lindsey Toth, President, MSDA



MSDA members celebrating a successful 2008-2009 year at their final member meeting.

The Massachusetts Student Dietetic Association (MSDA) is an organization for students from all realms of nutrition — undergraduates and graduates to dietetic interns — that works to promote student visibility, support networking events, and provide professional opportunities to up-and-coming nutrition professionals. Each year, the MSDA organizes two large-scale events aimed at increasing student awareness of and competency in the professional dietetics field: **The Dietetic Internship Selection Workshop** and **The Career Development Workshop**.

The Dietetic Internship Selection Workshop is held every fall for students interested in, or in the process of, applying to dietetic internships. The workshop features time for students to network with dietetic internship program directors from the New England area, in addition to providing students with the inside scoop and tips-and-tricks on how to make their application stand apart from the applicant pool.

Each spring, the MSDA also hosts a Career Development Workshop in conjunction with Tufts-Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy. This past year's workshop was a monumental success, with nutrition students travelling from across the New England area to gather in Boston for résumé reviews, interviewing advice, and financial planning guidance. Keynote speaker Dr. Quatromoni, DsC, MS, RD, graciously donated her time to offer inspirational advice on how nutrition students should come to understand their own unique strengths, ultimately forming their own goals and shortening the distance between “here” and “success.” The MSDA would like to thank all who donated their time and energy to make this a **FREE** event; the Career Development Workshop would be impossible without your efforts, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

These events have grown leaps and bounds in recent years, earning out-

standing accolades from both students and dietetic professionals alike. We hope to see you at one of these, or any of our other many events, meetings, and socials during the upcoming year. Check out our website at www.eatrightma.org/content3990 for details on these events as they become available, and for more information on the MSDA.

We look forward to working and learning with you this year! Want to get more involved? Contact Corinne Dobbas at cdobbas@gmail.com to learn how to apply for a position on the MSDA Promotions Committee.

Lindsey is a dietetic intern at Frances Stern Nutrition Center, Tufts Medical Center and M.S. Nutrition Communication Candidate, Tufts-Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy.

MDEF News and Scholarship Update

Mary Rowan Harrity, M.S., RD

Visit the MDA website for upcoming MDEF scholarship applications and instructions. Applications for 2010-2011 scholarships are due **May 1, 2010**. Recipients are notified in June, 2010 for the upcoming academic year.

MDEF offers Sodexho Undergraduate and Graduate scholarships (\$1000 each) and our own \$500 scholarship (degree not specified).

Don't forget ADAF also offers a variety of scholarships. For more information, visit the ADAF page of ADA's website at www.eatright.org.

We're all aware of the high cost of education these days. Please consider a donation to MDEF as you plan your charitable giving for the coming year. Giving to MDEF is also a great way to honor the memory of a friend or family member, as well as celebrate a colleague or significant achievement. Donations can be sent to MDEF, c/o Sue Lewis, 16 Lanewood Avenue, Framingham, MA 01701 with checks payable to MDEF or the Massachusetts Dietitians' Education Foundation.

Mary is the President of MDEF. If you would like to help MDEF raise money for scholarships, please contact her at RMHarrity@aol.com.

Eating Competence: A Paradigm Shift for Nutrition Professionals?

Lauren Oliver, MS, RD, LDN

Move over 24-hour recalls and plastic food models. Elyn Satter and colleagues are proposing a paradigm shift in nutrition assessment and education.

Known for her writing on the emotional and social roles of eating, Satter espouses positive feeding dynamics that balance structure with trust. The new "Satter Eating Competence Model" (ecSatter) similarly promotes a balance of discipline with permission to eat satisfying foods. It focuses on *how* individuals approach eating as opposed to what or how much they consume. Specifically, the model addresses four dimensions: eating attitudes, food acceptance skills, regulation of food intake and body weight, and management of eating context. "Eating competent" individuals are "confident, comfortable, and flexible with eating. They are matter-of-fact and reliable about getting enough to eat of enjoyable and nourishing food."¹

The accompanying measurement tool, the Eating Competence Satter Inventory (ecSI), has been validated with a general population, college-age students, and low-income, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)-eligible women.²⁻⁴ Individuals rank 16 statements based on frequency of agreement, such as: "I feel it is ok to eat food I like," and "I make time to eat." The tool does not include questions on specific types or frequency of foods eaten, body weight or satisfaction, physical activity, or health conditions.

Initial studies, however, link individuals scoring in the lowest tertile of eating competence (EC) with higher BMI, physical inactivity, body weight dissatisfaction, and pre-action stage of change for fruit and vegetable intake, as well as psychosocial factors like ineffectiveness and interpersonal distrust.⁵ Lower EC scores also correlated with CVD risk factors like higher blood pressure and elevated LDL levels.⁶

While these studies do not indicate causation, future research may better reveal how EC relates to individual health status. In the end, the ecSatter model may provide a new approach for nutrition assessment and education.

For more information about ecSatter, including a free webinar, visit www.ellynsatter.com or www.panutrition-tracks.org.

Lauren is a clinical dietitian for the Nutrition and Fitness for Life multidisciplinary family weight management program at Boston Medical Center.

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Support the change you wish to see

Heidi Harkopf, MS, RD and Rochelle Johnson, RD, LDN

Despite the best efforts of the health community and others, the obesity epidemic among children is spreading. Turning the tide requires everyone — schools, health professionals, and communities — to work together. Although schools have begun to take action by developing government mandated wellness policies, they cannot do it alone.

Striving for a solution, the National Dairy Council and the National Football League have introduced a new school-based initiative, *Fuel Up to Play 60*. The initiative motivates youth to get 60 minutes of physical activity every day and to eat more of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans' Food Groups to Encourage.¹ These foods – low-fat and fat-free dairy products, whole grains, fruits and vegetables – provide essential nutrients often missing in American children's diets. *Fuel Up to Play 60* mobilizes youth by providing direction and resources so they can create healthy changes within their school.

Approximately 60,000 schools nationwide are expected to participate in this free program during the upcoming school year and health professionals are encouraged to become community partners in the initiative. Visit www.SchoolWellnessKit.org to

find out more about *Fuel Up to Play 60* and become a community partner with a local school. Community partners will receive monthly email updates and contact information for local school personnel involved in the initiative.

Contact your local dairy council dietitian for additional information about *Fuel Up to Play 60*:

Eastern Massachusetts– Sheri Doucette, RD, LDN,
SDoucette@NewEnglandDairy.com, 617.734.6750x15

Western Massachusetts– Diane Krol, RD, LDN,
DKrol@NewEnglandDairy.com, 413.743.2345

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Heidi Harkopf, MS, RD, a nutrition specialist with New England Dairy & Food Council, works with health professionals and schools in Connecticut. Rochelle Johnson, RD, LDN is nutrition communications specialist with New England Dairy & Food Council and is based on Boston.

New job opportunities for RDs in treatment of pediatric obesity!

MDA Public Policy Panel

In May, ADA announced the Alliance Healthcare Initiative. This is an opportunity for RDs in Massachusetts to be in the forefront of working with pediatricians to impact the growth of obesity in the Commonwealth. The Alliance Initiative is a project spearheaded by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. ADA and the American Academy of Pediatrics are working with the Alliance, as well as health insurers, national medical associations and employers. Their goal is to offer comprehensive health benefits to children and families for the prevention, assessment and treatment of child obesity.

The Alliance Health Care Initiative gives access to additional visits with primary care providers and registered dietitians. The project will offer four additional visits to primary care providers and four visits with a registered dietitian. There will be an emphasis on the program in 14 states, plus Washington DC, with Massachusetts being one. Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) of Massachusetts is the first insurer in Massachusetts to sign on to the program. Benefits will be rolled out one state at a time and at this point we do not know when BCBS will be offering their benefits as part of the Initiative. For more information log on to: www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/advocacy_20436_ENU_HTML.htm.

In addition, Massachusetts registered dietitians will have another opportunity to make their unique understanding of food and nutrition behavior known to the medical community. Starting this year, the state will be computing BMI

for children in the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th grades and sending reports home to parents. The first phase will begin with districts that are funded by the Essential School Health funds from the Department of Public Health. MDA currently has a representative on both the Mass in Motion Advisory Board and its BMI work group to advocate for a continuum of care that would include the RD. For more information, go to www.mass.gov/massinmotion/.

What can you do?

- Go to the ADA website link above and become knowledgeable about the Initiative.
- Encourage other providers you work with to become involved as well and sign on to provide equal benefits.
- Advocate for CDR to schedule a pediatric weight management certification training in Massachusetts. E-mail Manese Douglas at weightmgmt@eatright.org to request training.
- Become certified in pediatric weight management.
- Continue to develop relationships with pediatricians to become the preferred resource for families who need intervention.

If you have more questions or would like to become active in MDA's public policy committee, contact Jose Wendel, MDA State Public Policy Coordinator, at publicpolicy@eatrightma.org.

Using Google Trends in Practice

Eric Esterling, MS, RD

You have probably used Google to learn more about a term or subject. Google Trends is a newer service which shows the popularity of a search term in graph form. Accessed from www.google.com/trends, it works similarly to Google. Simply type your inquiry into the search box and the result is a graph showing how frequently the term has been searched over time.

For example, if you enter “weight loss” into Google Trends, you will see a sharp decline of interest in weight loss as the winter holidays approach, followed by a sharp rise at the New Year. This pattern has persisted annually for as long as they have been collecting data. The lesson being if you are going to write articles about weight loss or pay for ads about weight loss the best timing is after the winter holidays, not during.

The term “nutrition” has a similar pattern. To compare two terms separate them with a comma in the search box. Figure 1 illustrates the results of searching for “nutrition, weight loss.”

You might also want to combine two terms. For example, to see the frequency of “health” and “healthy” in a single graph, combine terms separated by a vertical bar such as “health | healthy.”

Another practical application of Google Trends is to gauge how attuned the public is to nutrition news. For example, vitamin D has been a hot topic in nutrition circles recently and Google Trends confirms the public has noticed. Searches for vitamin D have been steadily increasing for four years and recently surpassed interest in vitamin C (Figure 2).

Google Trends is also helpful when tracking nutrition fads. A few years ago mangosteen was a popular search.

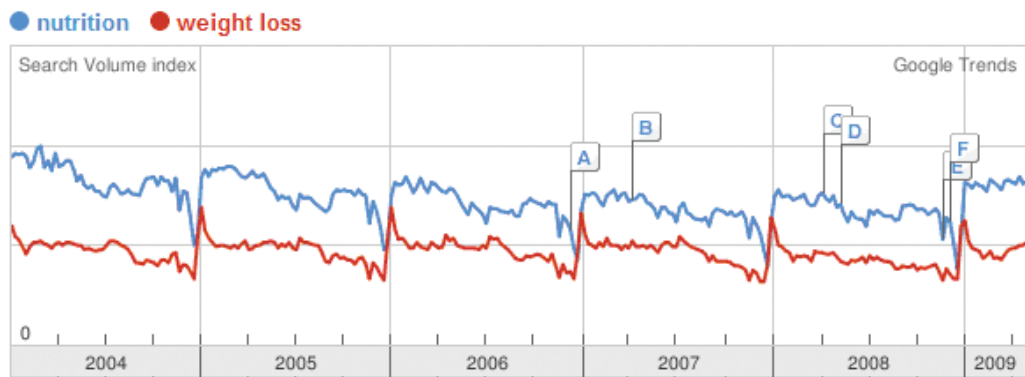


Figure 1: Interest in nutrition and weight loss experience annual decline around the holidays



Figure 2: Searches on in vitamin D has recently surpassed interest in vitamin

However, a new darling of multi-level marketing outfits appears to be açai. Google Trends shows interest in mangosteen has been on the decline while interest in açai is on a rapid rise. With that knowledge, a nutrition professional might decide it more worth preparing to answer questions regarding açai than mangosteen.

One caveat of Google Trends graphs is that they show relative volume, not absolute volume. So, when you search for two terms on two separate graphs, the results may appear similar. However, placing them on the same graph may result in one proving much more popular than the other.

Google Trends is a quick, if unscientific, method of gauging public interest in a wealth of topics.

For more examples of how to use Google Trends, visit www.NutritionWebServices.com/articles/GoogleTrends.

Eric is a registered dietitian and internet technologist. For help with your internet questions contact him at Eric@NutritionWebServices.com.



In Sync

Using the Internet to Search for Scholarly Nutrition Articles

Jennifer Looney

Over the past couple years, the Internet has made the process of finding scholarly and popular nutrition articles easier for nutrition professionals. There are free tools available on the Internet such as search engines, as well as open access journals and free digital resources. Here are three options you may want to check out!

Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>)- A search engine providing access to abstracts and some full text scholarly articles from a variety of publishers, associations, and academic societies. Google Scholar also provides access to e-books and theses. Availability of full text is dependent upon the publisher granting access and whether the content is posted for free by the author. The search engine also offers an *Advanced Scholar Search* which increases the accuracy and effectiveness of searches. You can search the desired topic using

key words, author, publication, date, or subject areas.

PubMed Central (www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov)- The U.S. National Institutes of Health free digital archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature. It contains numerous online journals in its Journal Database such as *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Food and Nutrition Research*, *The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, and *Nutrition and Metabolism*. Not all articles provided on PubMed can be accessed as full text. However, abstracts are available.

Nutrition Journal (www.nutritionjournal.com)- A free peer-reviewed online journal published by BioMed Central that consists of full text articles related to human nutrition. Free issues are available along with open access to journals. It offers both quick and advanced

search options and allows searches to be stored for later use. New results can also be e-mailed to the researcher as often as desired. Subscription to RSS feed is accessible which allows you to receive the latest articles. An article alert can be set up as well, so current articles related to your topic of interest are e-mailed.

Jennifer is a graduate student in nutrition at Framingham State College.



Public Policy Opportunity: Join the MDA Grassroots Network!

The MDA Public Policy Panel is working to re-establish a strong grassroots network in Massachusetts. With healthcare reform in a major transitional period, now is the time to have our voices heard. One of our goals is to establish relationships with each of our 10 Congressmen and both Senators in order to make sure they know who dietitians are and what roles we can play in the Healthcare system. We are looking for a grassroots liaison for each district to take the lead in making appointments with their congressman. The grassroots liaison will be the main point of contact for ADA action alerts and will lead the charge, with the assistance of the MDA Public Policy Coordinator, in educating the Congressman in each district.

We are still recruiting for grassroots liaisons in the following districts:

- District #3 – James McGovern
- District #5 – Niki Tsongas
- District #7 – Ed Markey
- District #8 – Michael Capuano
- District #9 – Stephen Lynch

If you are not sure which district you live in, please see the following website for a listing of towns by district: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts's_congressional_districts.

For those who would like to become active but a little shy about becoming a grassroots liaison, consider starting out as a member of the grassroots network, (i.e.: one of several support people for the grassroots liaison). For more information, contact Kathryn Rocha, MDAPublic Policy Coordinator, at kbaron14@yahoo.com

Pay it forward... volunteer with MDA!

If you have two hours or ten, MDA has a volunteer opportunity for you! Several of our committees can use your help.

Public Policy – Become engage around national and state public policy and legislation that affects dietitians and nutrition practice. Contact Jose Wendel at jmwendel@comcast.net.

Mentoring – Be a resource and give back to the profession by mentoring students or other RDs with peer to peer mentoring. Contact Julie Robarts at jrobarts@bidmc.harvard.edu.

Membership – Engage existing and new members on this newly created committee. Contact Janel Orvrat at jmwendel@comcast.net.

Awards and Scholarships – Review award and scholarship applications. This is a spring-time committee. Contact Kimberly Mirsky at kimberly_mirsky@yahoo.com.

Massachusetts Dietetic Education Foundation (MDEF) – Engage members in the work of the foundation that supports learning opportunities and provides scholarships to students and dietitians. Contact Mary Harrity at rmharrity@aol.com.



Standing Up for a Sustainable Health System

Stacia Clinton, RD, LDN



Discussions of health and nutrition often do not address broader ecological issues, such as how our food is grown, processed, and distributed. It's critical that, as recognized experts in food and nutrition related topics, registered dietitians understand the impact our current industrialized food system has on health. It then becomes our ethical responsibility to encourage those methods of food production and distribution which support a sustainable health system.

Our local farm-to-plate model of 50 years ago has transformed to that of processing-plant-to-plate. As a result of industrialized livestock production methods, amplified amounts of greenhouse gasses are released into the atmosphere. United Nations climate chief Dr. Rajendra Pachauri noted that one meat-free day per week is the single most effective strategy to assist in the climate crisis.¹ This change may not come easy in our culture of burgers and chicken nuggets, but RDs have an enormous opportunity to encourage a more balanced menu such as moving meat from being the focus of the plate.

Hospitals, as the center of the health care industry and models of positive health behaviors, have tremendous potential to provide market leadership by adopting food purchasing policies and practices that steer the food system in more positive directions. Within Massachusetts alone, health care facilities are beginning to make the critical connections between the inadequacies of the food system and their responsibility to promote sustainable, community supportive foods by signing Health Care Without Harms' Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge. Fairview Hospital in the Berkshires along with Cooley Dickenson Hospital in Northampton were first in the state to sign, with Baystate Health Systems in Springfield following shortly thereafter. Boston Medical Center, the most recent champion to commit to the Pledge, designed a comprehensive program to support healthy and sustainable foods. Pledge signers Covenant Health Systems initiated a ground-breaking collaboration with Red Tomato, a non-profit farm-to-institution distributor, to source local and sustainable produce to their facilities.

As stewards to our community, it is our task to search out educational outreach opportunities. Within each unique situation, there is an opportunity to bridge the knowledge gap of an individual's food choice to their social, ecological, and personal health impact.

For more information, visit www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org.

References

¹ Jowit, J. UN says eat less meat to curb global warming. *The Observer*. Sept. 7, 2008. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/sep/07/food.foodanddrink>. Accessed May 9, 2009

Stacia works with Health Care Without Harm through her affiliation with the North Shore based, non-profit organization Healthlink. She can be reached at Stacia20@yahoo.com.

MDA Membership Committee: Bringing the Benefits of MDA Straight to You

The MDA membership committee has been hard at work developing strategies to bring the benefits of MDA membership straight to you! In August we had our first networking event at Ward's Berry Farm in Sharon, MA. It was a great opportunity to socialize while enjoying the fruits of summer.

Our MDA Facebook and LindedIn groups are also up and running. Please use this resource to network, share continuing education opportunities, as well as advertise any fun events taking place around the State. To join, go to www.facebook.com or www.linkedin.com and search for "Massachusetts Dietetic Association."

Coming this fall will be MDA's first ever Boston-area Book Club. Stay tuned to learn more about which book we'll be reading, as well as where we'll be meeting to discuss. If you would like to attend, have questions, or would like to form an MDA book group in your area, drop a line on Facebook or LinkedIn to get started.

Fall is the season for food festivals all over New England. Here are a few to whet your appetite!

Sincerely,
Janel Ovrut janelovrut@gmail.com
Marcy Anderson
Casey Lewis
Meghan Ariagno
Peggy Leung

September

What: What the Fluff? Festival
Where: Somerville, MA
When: Saturday, September 26th, 2009 at 6:00 pm
Info: www.unionsquaremain.org

October

What: National Cranberry Festival
Where: Carver, MA
When: October 10th-12th
Info: www.edaville.com

What: Wellfleet Oysterfest
Where: Wellfleet, MA
When: October 17th -19th
Info: www.wellfleetoysterfest.org

November

What: Boston Vegetarian Food Festival
Where: Reggie Lewis Center Boston, MA
When: October 31st - November 1st
Info: <http://bostonveg.org/foodfest/>

If you have any additional input for the Membership Committee, please let us know.

SEMDA celebrating 30 years

Amy Rose Sager, RD, LDN, CLT
SEMDA Public Relations Director



SEMDA Planning Board meeting at Duxbury Beach. From left to right: Linda Davenport, Andrea Gulezian, Ann Love (one of founders of SEMDA), Kris Hatch, Candi Keith, Amy Rose Sager, Cindy Crownshield, Cathy O'Brien, and Patty Sylvia.

Southeastern Massachusetts Dietetics Association (SEMDA) is a regional group of MDA providing professional education and networking opportunities for the past 30 years.

Ann Love and colleagues founded SEMDA in 1979, enabling dietitians to receive continuing education units (CEUs) as they took time off from work to raise a family. SEMDA founders envisioned a way for dietitians in Southeastern Massachusetts to earn CEUs at a reasonable price without needing to travel into Boston. The first meetings were held at the Brockton VA hospital with 25 dietitians attending.

SEMDA has been able to continue offering low priced educational lectures thanks to the dedicated group that make up their Board. The current SEMDA Board includes Cindy Crownshield as Chairperson, Amy Rose Sager as Public Relations, and Candi Keith as Treasurer. Andrea Gulezian, Patti Sylvia, Linda Davenport, Kris Hatch and Cathy O'Brien are also board members.

The 2009-2010 year is slated with a bounty of continuing education lectures. Topics range from sustainability and locally grown produce; cancer and nutrition; renal nutrition and functional foods; to dysphasia. Seminars are generally held monthly on Monday evenings from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm in the Brockton area.

As SEMDA continues to grow, the group has expanded their social networking. You can join the group on Facebook and LinkedIn by searching for "Southeastern Massachusetts Dietetic Association (SEMDA)." To stay involved, check out our upcoming events posted on the MDA website.

See you at the next meeting!

Massachusetts Dietetic Association 2009-2010

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Save the Date!

What: MDA Annual Nutrition Conference and Exposition (ANCE)

When: March 26, 2010

Where: Four Points Sheraton, Norwood, MA

If you are interested in being part of the MDA ANCE Committee,* we would like to hear from you! Please notify Maureen Kelly Gonsalves, MEd, RD at admin@eatrightma.org.

**Please note, the majority of committee work is accomplished via conference calls and e-mails with only two to three face-to-face meetings. As a thank you for the donation of their time, ANCE planning committee members receive free attendance to the conference.*