The President’s Message

By: Patricia Nicholas Mattingly, MS, RD

It’s a Brave New World

Nutrition diagnosis… board certified… advanced practice….The field of dietetics is rapidly changing. On an individual basis the majority of us are where we should be. We have changed with the times. But are we ready for the future?

Our 75th annual meeting highlights some of the directions in which the field is moving. Talking with our colleagues and meeting with the exhibitors will let us know some of the other directions. It would be a shame to waste all of this energy. Consider it the “greening” of the field of dietetics as we look for ways to harness all this energy.

At recent NJDA board meetings two issues became apparent. One is that as individuals we have become actively involved in other nutrition related organizations, sit on special task forces concerned with a nutrition issues, or are active in either local or state politics. The other issue is that we are moving forward and taking on new responsibilities in our jobs that a few years ago would have been considered beyond our scope of practice. These are exciting times.

Unfortunately, we are doing this alone as individuals. Some of us have made great strides and have the salaries and professional recognition to show for it. This you may think is adequate. After all, at the end of the day, it is enough that we are concerned about ourselves and our families. There is only so much time in the day.

So while we are moving our field upward, it is in a thin, straight line. This can be a very unstable foundation for the field. Think how much more stable this base would be if all 2300 of us followed this same line. How can we accomplish this without having to commit time that we don’t have to give?

We can move light years ahead if we had the following information about our members:

❖ Members presently sitting on a state or local task force or ad hoc committee concerned with a nutrition issue
❖ Members presently holding board positions or actively involved in a nutrition-related organization
❖ Members actively involved with state or local politics or those who have connections who are
❖ Members who are working in media or have connections to the media industry

We may have known this information at one time but the board has changed, faces have changed and information lost. If we can revive this information we would be able to reconstruct our “web of influence” across the state.

The second issue involves having a better understanding of what all of us are doing on a day to day basis on our jobs. Some of us write orders. Some do not. Some do physical assessments. Some do not. I would think we would all want the entire field to move ahead together. So we would also need to know what are your responsibilities and scope of practice at your job. Then those of us who are not quite at the top are able to get the assistance they need to get there. It is hard to move into the future if your facility is still behind the times.

This information is critical for us to have at this time as we move towards licensure. It is imperative that we leave room to grow in the future and not limit ourselves by having an overly restrictive bill. Make your voice heard. This will affect your future.

Information can be sent to Marina Atkinson at our Association’s headquarters at: matkinson@hq4u.com.

Looking forward to seeing you at the 75th Annual meeting!

Pat Nicholas Mattingly, President
For those of you who don’t know me, I have been the media rep for NJDA and have spent lots of time writing and being interviewed by the media. I have sought to continue my education in nutrition to make me a better resource for the media AND have been working towards making a career using the media to educate the public. The ADA trends survey found that respondents cited television, magazines, and newspapers as the top three information sources, while doctors, dietitians, and nutritionists were the least cited.

Just as we fight for licensure in NJ for dietetics professionals, I could make the same argument that more dietetics professionals need to be involved in the media. We’ve seen the headlines, read the quotes and often other people are giving out nutrition information and misinformation at the same time!

Last summer, while I was interning at ABC News’ Medical Unit in Boston (an article for another issue), I received a phone call from a producer from the BBC Productions, noting that I submitted my reel last year for Honey We’re Killing the Kids and wanted to know if I was still interested in hosting a reality show. For those of you who don’t know the show, it’s about taking unhealthy kids and their families and turning their lives around! Then the fun began. I went to NYC for a test shoot, knowing 3 of the other people who were brought in for the audition. My only television experience had been in news and “reality” TV is soooo different!

I was thrilled to get called back in to meet with the executives at the BBC while The Learning Channel (TLC) made their final decision. When I retrieved the message from my cell phone to call back the executive producer, my hands were shaking so bad, that I could not even write down his number.

It was an interesting process to get an agent, and see how many times a contract, its terms and conditions could change. I had to complete a 30 page background check and when it was all done, the rehearsals began. I had the pleasure of spending 3 days shopping with a stylist for my wardrobe and no matter how fit I may be, this was an endurance event!

However, all the prior rehearsals did not prepare me for the feeling of being in a new studio set, knowing that I was following another host who was completely different, and being the new face of a modified show. Talk about pressure! I am generally a very cool, calm professional, but in looking at some footage from my first day in the studio, did I look stiff!!! The families were super nice and I explained to them that I was just as nervous as them.

The work days are long (10-12 hours). My kids have been a professional dream come true. The show airs on Mondays, on TLC at 9pm! Be sure to check out their website – as I will have video podcasts online, too!
The 75th Annual Meeting will be held on May 4th at the Crystal Plaza, in Livingston, NJ. Our agenda is filled with cutting edge information to include the latest on Vitamin D recommendations, health effects of soy foods and isoflavones, and an update on wellness rules in New Jersey schools.

Current information on trans fats as well as fats and oils will be presented. The ADA workshop on Standards of Approved Professional Performance for RD’s in Diabetes Care is also featured on the agenda.

If this does not touch your scope of practice, then be prepared for the presentations “Going from Traditional to Non-Traditional Roles in Dietetics” and “Advanced Practice Physical Assessment Skills.”

In keeping with our need to tap into the best reimbursement and outcomes research, we will have an up to the minute update to help all practitioners’ undertone and implement the Nutrition Care Process and Nutrition Diagnosis.

Rounding out our day will be presentations on Evidence based practice including “Translating research into practice”, An Update on Nutrition & Aging Today” and “Naturally Nutrient Dense Foods: Packing More Nutrition onto your Plate.”

In addition, we are partnering with “Dress for Success.” The mission of Dress for Success is to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. We will be asking for donations of suits, business attire, and such to be used by the network to promote the success of women.

We will have more information on this in the registration brochure.

Watch your mail for the registration. If you have any questions, please contact me:

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We are ready to move our licensure agenda forward during the next legislative session which will start next year. Princeton Public Affairs Group including Dale Florio, Sonia Delgado and Rob Nixon met with us last week to talk about a new plan for the upcoming year to get us ready once again. ADA is assisting with the help of the Washington, DC office by reviewing our bills and offering suggestions for changes relative to other states successes. So, we are off and running once again and we need your help.

Our goal is to position NJDA and NJ Registered Dietitians as the nutrition experts in the state and we are seeking licensure as we move forward. We need you to share with us any special nutrition or health initiatives that you are involved in. We need to know if you have direct contact with any NJ state senators, NJ state assembly members or the governor’s office. If you have county legislative contacts with freeholders, mayors or other local legislative leaders, we need to know that information.

Remember, “all politics is local” so your local contacts are VERY important to us. We also need as many members to join our “legislative network” as possible. We need your name, address, phone and e-mail. We will be in contact with you by e-mail. Building our grassroots network is critical for us to be successful. Please send your info to: Karen Enslle by e-mail: enslle@aesop.rutgers.edu. Thanks very much!
When I graduated from college two years ago, I quickly realized that I had earned much more than just a degree in nutrition—over the years my studies turned into a passion. Last year, my dietetic internship allowed me to explore my interests further only to discover that I love writing, more specifically, writing for the consumer. It should come as no surprise when I tell you that my ultimate goal is to become a Nutrition Editor for one of the glossy magazines. No need to burst my bubble though. I’m fully aware that these opportunities are few and far between. However, I strongly believe that your passions lead to success. As an aspiring nutrition entrepreneur and writer, I’m ready to take the necessary risks and sketch out my plan of action.

In September 2006, I received “the phone call” from Ellie Krieger, MS RD, host of the Food Network’s “Healthy Appetite” about an opportunity to work with her “behind the scenes” on her show. This opportunity would prove to be my first stepping stone into the world of nutrition, cooking, television, and writing—it was as if all my interests were wrapped up in one complete package and delivered to me on my doorstep. Only four months out of my internship and several days after passing my RD exam, I was told I got the job. To date, my work experience with Ellie has been everything I imagined it would be and more. She has proven to not only be a wonderful boss, but she’s also my mentor and friend.

Nutrition communication in the media has become increasingly popular in today’s society. Registered Dietitians are now working in such diverse environments ranging from television and radio to magazines and the internet. Ellie is a prime example of a Registered Dietitian on the forefront of this field. Being the TV Host of a Food Network show as well as author of “Small Changes, Big Results”, Ellie is constantly working to effectively communicate clear, simple nutritional messages to the public while delivering healthy, delicious recipes along the way.

As Ellie’s assistant, helping to incorporate nutrition research into the show’s scripts is one of my favorite responsibilities. It’s important to convey scientific research into quick sound bites of information. In the show, the viewer not only hears the message, but can instantly understand the concept. When I began working during Season Two of the show, transforming boring facts into fun-to-read tips became a challenge. I finally realized that I needed to step into the viewer’s shoes in order to truly understand their perspective. For example, instead of writing: “one cup of Portobello mushrooms has 416 mg potassium,” the words “one Portobello mushroom packs in as much potassium as a banana” simply roll off my pen. This statement makes it real and tangible for the viewer because they have something to compare it to. Appropriate phrasing is necessary to captivate your audience. Not only is it important to be factual, but you must also entertain the reader or viewer with your play on words.

In addition to the show, I assist Ellie with writing rough drafts of nutrition tips, articles, and one-line teasers that are used for many projects. As the author of her own book and many published articles, Ellie possesses great knowledge in writing and editing.

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Small Steps to Health and Wealth
Karen Ensle, Ed.D., RD, FADA, CFCS
Family & Community Health Sciences Educator • Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Union County

Every New Year’s Eve, millions of Americans resolve to get healthier and wealthier. Booksellers grow rich on sales of books containing information about ways to accomplish these resolutions. But a year later, the same millions of Americans are back making the same resolutions. Why is this?

After doing extensive research on the financial aspects of health, Barbara O’Neill, PhD, CFP and Karen Ensle, EdD, RD, FADA faculty members of Rutgers Cooperative Extension/ New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), began to see a pattern. The basic behaviors recommended for health were very similar to advice on increasing wealth. But the existing literature did not provide people with the tools to use new behaviors to bring about positive change. O’Neill and Ensle saw the need for a method that would help people make behavior changes that would improve both areas.

“Health and wealth should be viewed as two concurrent goals for improving your lifestyle,” said Ensle, a Family & Community Health Sciences Educator for Rutgers Cooperative Extension. O’Neill, an extension specialist in financial resource management agrees “Both health and wealth are essential for a happy, successful life. If you concentrate on work so much that you don’t have time to exercise, it is very possible that you will be spending all of your hard earned money treating illnesses in the future. Conversely, a person who ignores their personal finances as they train for marathons may eventually become ill in response to the stress of insufficient funds for retirement.”

O’Neill and Ensle have developed 25 strategies, or small steps, that can be applied to both health and wealth goals. They don’t expect people to adopt all 25 strategies—in fact they advise against this. Instead, they recommend the “Jersey Diner Approach,” that is, each individual should choose three to four strategies that appeal to them the most.

The 25 strategies include such advice as “Track Your Current Behavior,” “Make Progress Every Day” and “Compare Yourself to Recommended Benchmarks.” Each strategy suggests specific behavior changes that will improve health and wealth. People are encouraged, for example, to track both their eating and spending patterns to assess their current status in each area. Each strategy has been tested by behavior-change researchers or repeatedly

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recommended in self-improvement literature.

O’Neill and Ensle have compiled worksheets and tables to guide people through every recommended strategy. There are tables that show the impact over time of saving $20 a week, how much a person can save by adding 2% to their tax-deferred savings, a body mass index chart, a list of calories expended in common physical activities, and more.

The program, Small Steps to Health and Wealth, was launched in New Jersey on March 1 in several locations, including Cook Campus of Rutgers in New Brunswick. O’Neill and Ensle have issued a challenge for Rutgers faculty, staff and students to form teams and participate in the program. On their web site, http://www.njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/, they also offer individuals the opportunity to register and to have their progress monitored by extension faculty. In collaboration with researchers at the University of Arizona, the data that is collected on participants will be analyzed to determine the impact of the program.

The strategies, worksheets and tables can be found online at www.njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw/. Over 10,000 books have been sold nationally to dietetics, nutrition and finance professionals through the Extension system. The book and logos are trademarked and approved by USDA. Small Steps to Health and Wealth workbooks are $15.00 each and can be purchased from Dr. Ensle (ensle@aesop.rutgers.edu) or Dr. O’Neill or in quantity from the publisher, available at www.nraes.org.

Exploring the World of Nutrition Communications with a “Healthy Appetite”

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Being aware of my strong interest in this area, Ellie provides me with constructive criticism on writing projects that will help to enhance my skills. Through time and practice, her advice will serve as a guiding tool in advancing my writing career.

As my mentor, Ellie also invites me to observe her at events that she believes will be a benefit me. I recently went on set with her at a satellite media tour which proved to be an absolutely incredible experience. In the control room, I met the production team and observed Ellie as she delivered her nutrition messages to television shows and radio stations nationwide. I’ve also been given the opportunity to attend multiple PR events, including a South Beach Diet promotion event for their new product line, and the Cherry Marketing Institute event for the release of the Cherry Nutrition Report. Here, I had the opportunity to network with editors, journalists, and fellow RD’s who have taking entrepreneurial routes.

Our profession has only just begun to expand into the different genres of nutrition like the mass media. With leaders like Ellie and other RD’s in the public eye, we will be able to reach a vast number of Americans and positively impact society. With only less than a year of RD experience under my belt and a world of opportunity lying before me, I’m excited to say that I’ve taken my first step towards making my dream a reality. In time, the opportunities will begin to reveal themselves and no longer will they be few and far between. For now, it all starts in the kitchen, testing out recipes and modifying ingredients to finally ending on set with the crew, hearing those three big words, “That’s a Wrap!”
Where is Licensure Nationally?

According to the American Dietetic Association, forty-six states currently have statutory provisions regarding professional regulation of dietitians and/or nutritionists. The rationale for legislatures acting to protect these titles is simple: the public deserves to know which individuals are qualified by education, experience, and examination to provide nutrition care services.

Enacting licensure laws in those states that still do not have a law remains a high priority of the American Dietetic Association in the area of state affairs. Many will say that, in an era of less government, fewer licensure laws are necessary and that government should be getting out of this arena. The American Dietetic Association strongly rejects this notion. State legislatures are charged with protecting the health and safety of the public. Accordingly, every state regulates occupations and professions that have an impact on the public’s health and safety.

Unfortunately, until relatively recently, the vital link between nutrition and good health had not been fully recognized. As the public has become aware of the importance of good nutrition, many entrepreneurs have taken advantage of the newly recognized market. While many of these products and services may be worthwhile when used in the context of an overall good nutrition regimen, some are simply capitalizing on the new infatuation the consuming public has with healthy eating and nutrition.

Licensing of dietitians and nutritionists assures the public that individuals disseminating nutrition advice have the appropriate education and experience. As medical nutrition therapy is used in the treatment of various diseases, individuals seeking nutritional advice that are medically compromised deserve the assurance that the individual treating them has the requisite education and experience. Licensure laws protect the public from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals who would portray themselves as nutrition experts.

As educated and qualified healthcare practitioners, dietitians and nutritionists have the primary obligation to promote public health. The rationale behind licensure is consistent with this obligation. Licensure

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laws are not intended to restrict freedom of speech or to monopolize any business. The same arguments opposing licensure laws could be used against licensure of physicians, nurses and many other healthcare professionals but legislatures in every state have recognized that the protection of the public health justifies regulation. The same argument should prevail when discussing licensure of dietitians and nutritionists. Please take a look at the advocacy section of the ADA website.

Source: Website of the American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org

Certificate of Training in Adult Weight Management

The Commission on Dietetic Registration will be offering Certificate of Training programs in Adult and Childhood Adolescent Weight Management

November 15-17, 2007: East Rutherford, New Jersey

For registration information and to view the certificate requirements, timeline, registration deadlines and agenda:

http://www.cdrnet.org/wtmgmt/CertificateOfTraining.htm