

## **The Access to Frontline Care Act (HR 531)**

### **About Us**

Registered dietitians work to improve the health of all Americans through access to healthy food and nutrition services. The American Dietetic Association represents more than 70,000 members; and is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.

### **We Ask For Your Support of The Passage Of *The Access To Frontline Care Act***

HR 531 directs the Secretary of HHS to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program. The Secretary will make student loan repayments in exchange for providing services for two years in a frontline care scarcity area. "Frontline care services" is defined as health care services in the field of general surgery, optometry, ophthalmology, chiropractic, physical therapy, audiology, speech language pathology, pharmacies, public health, podiatric medicine, **dietetics**, occupational therapy, general pediatrics, respiratory therapy, medical technology, otolaryngology, or radiologic technology.

### **Limited Access Contributes Poor Health**

Without access to proper healthcare and nutrition services a person's chances of developing chronic diseases increases. For example:

- A woman who does not have access to reliable, credible nutrition education on the benefits of breastfeeding puts her infants at risk for developing more costly future illnesses.
- Low income Americans who lack the access to proper nutrition are more likely to develop diabetes<sup>1</sup>
- In 2008 22 percent of American adults living 200 percent below the poverty line were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, compared to 8 percent of the total population.
- Medical nutrition therapy provided by registered dietitians helps to prevent and treat diabetes while saving our system money.

### **Limited Access Increases Poverty**

A 2007 GAO report linked poverty to adverse health outcomes limited or no access to proper healthcare. *Bottom line a lack of proper healthcare is contributing to America's problem with poverty, and vice versa.*<sup>2</sup>

### **By cosponsoring HR 531 you will:**

- Help students become registered dietitians to meet the need of nutrition services for an underserved population.
- Help to reduce healthcare costs by giving the underserved the care to assume personal responsibility in their healthcare.
- Increase the availability of needed care to those who go without until the only option is expensive emergency care.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gao.gov/news.items/d07343t.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gao.gov/news.items/d07343t.pdf>