

## White House Conference on Food and Nutrition (H.R. 1382)

### Situation

The White House Conference on Food and Nutrition Act (HR 1382) was introduced on April 6, 2011 by Congressman James McGovern (D-MA) and Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO). On May 11, 2011 HR 1382 was referred to subcommittee on Nutrition and Horticulture within the Agriculture Committee. Currently there are no hearings scheduled and has 2 co-sponsors.

### *Background – 1969 White House Conference on Food and Nutrition*

The First and only Conference on Food and Nutrition was held in December 1969. The conference focused on reducing hunger and malnutrition through poverty reduction. It provided many successful outcomes, spurring not only government action but resulting in the efforts of state government, private industry and non-profits pulling their resources together to address the problems associated with hunger and malnutrition. The accomplishments of the conference included:

- Expansion of the Food Stamp Program → In 10 months following the conference participation jumped from 3.6 to 9.3 million and nearly all of the counties in the US began administrating the program.
- Improved Child Nutrition Programs → In 1970, the President signed a law amending the national School Lunch Act which encouraged states to extend the lunch program to every school, established national standards of minimum income eligibility for free and reduced-price lunches and improved nutrition education programs in schools and lunchrooms.
- Improvements in other Nutrition Programs → The USDA's nutrition education programs were expanded to use 7,000 paraprofessional's nutrition assistants to perform outreach work. Also, the Office of Education created programs to develop curriculum guides and nutritional information for schools.
- Consumer Projection and Information Activities → The FDA, in 1970, contracted with the national Academy of Sciences to produce nutritional guidelines for certain classes of food to be used by both consumer and industry. The Federal Trade Commission also created a new division of food enforcement (particular attention was given to advertisement aimed at children).<sup>1</sup>

Since the last conference, some areas of health and nutritional intake have improved, while other areas have declined. Childhood obesity, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers related to poor nutrition have risen substantially, costing our health care system billions while increasing mortality rates among Americans with these chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nns.nih.gov/1969/conference.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Boyle JP, et al. Projection of the Year 2050 Burden of Diabetes in the US Adult Population: Dynamic Modeling of Incidence, Mortality and PreDiabetes Prevalence. Population Health Metrics 2010, 8:29. <http://www.pophealthmetrics.com/content/8/1/29> (accessed 1/15/2011)

## **Overview of the Bill**

The White House Conference on Food and Nutrition Act would direct:

- The President to call the White House Conference on Food and Nutrition to be convened in order to make fundamental policy recommendations on ways to end hunger and to improve nutrition in the United States; and
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA), and the Secretary of the Treasury to plan and conduct the Conference.
- The purposes of the conference will be to:
  - Review the current structure, scope and effectiveness of relevant legislation.
  - Explore ways to improve efficiencies in current federal, state and local programs.
  - Identify new ways to utilize US resources to meet the nutritional needs of Americans.
  - Highlight emerging and innovative programs from the public and private sectors.
  - Identify opportunities for effective partnerships between government, industry and the nonprofit sectors.

## **Policy Committee Development**

- A Policy Committee will be established to: make recommendations set a proposed agenda for the conference as well as establishing a number of delegates (that will be comprised of representatives from the field of food and nutrition) to attend the conference.
- The Policy Committee and the delegate selection will serve as an indispensable opportunity for Registered Dietitians to be involved in the conference.
- Of the 17 member committee the President will select 9 members, 6 of which will be chosen from the Professional field of food and nutrition. In addition Registered Dietitians will be available to be selected as delegates to assist the Policy Committee in carrying out the duties of the Conference.

## **Outcomes**

- The bill establishes that no later than 100 days after the Conference adjourns, the Policy Committee will have to prepare a preliminary report to be entered into the record and made available to the states.
- The Policy Committee will then ask for the state's views on the report no later than 45 days after the report is delivered.
- Finally, no later than 6 months after, the Policy Committee will produce its final report to be entered into the register and to be delivered to the President and Congress.

## **Bottom Line**

This is a great opportunity for ADA to lead on the development of food and nutrition policy in the months and years ahead. Supporting HR 1382 and the promotion of a renewed national dialogue on food, nutrition and hunger will help to improve the health of Americans.

## Talking Points for Visits

### Introduction: Who You Are

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

### What:

Our purpose today is to ask for support through co-sponsorship and/or passage of the White House Conference on Food and Nutrition.

### The Problem and the Solution

It has been 42 years since the first White House Conference on Food and Nutrition and in that time, a new list of nutrition and food related illnesses have begun to dominate and cripple our ability to lead healthier lives. Chronic diseases such as type 2-diabetes, childhood obesity and certain types of cancer are costing America billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of lives. Americans who are food insecure is also growing, due to the rapid growth of poverty in America. Individuals who do not have access to the recommended amount of food increase their risks of developing food related illnesses.

HR 1382 will establish a forum where health and nutrition professionals – including registered dietitians – will be able to come together to discuss and develop ideas to help best reduce chronic disease and deal with poverty-related issues such as food insecurity. Including:

- Diabetes
  - A recently released study from the 2011 national Diabetes Fact Sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predict a dramatic increase in diabetes between 2010 and 2050. Using this new information from the CDC, the Institute for Alternative Futures diabetes model estimates that the number of Americans living with diabetes (diagnosed and undiagnosed) will increase 64% by 2050 to 53,100,000 people.<sup>3</sup>
  - The resulting medical and societal costs of diabetes will be \$514.4 billion – a 72% increase from 2010.<sup>4</sup>
  - In total, there are 25.8 million people living with diabetes...costing the healthcare system \$178 billion per year. In addition there are roughly 75 million more Americans considered “high risk” for developing type-2 diabetes.
  - Lifestyle changes including access to healthy foods and knowledge on how to create a balanced diet have been shown to reduce the cost of diabetes and prediabetes.
- Obesity
  - In 2008 (latest data available) there were 13 million children between the ages of 2 and 18 suffering from obesity.
  - Obesity is costing the healthcare system \$147 billion per year.

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<sup>3</sup> Institute for Alternative Futures Diabetes 2025 Forecasting Model, 2010  
<http://www.altfutures.org/diabetes2025>

<sup>4</sup> Boyle JP, et al. Projection of the Year 2050 Burden of Diabetes in the US Adult Population: Dynamic Modeling of Incidence, Mortality and PreDiabetes Prevalence. Population Health Metrics 2010, 8:29.  
<http://www.pophealthmetrics.com/content/8/1/29> (accessed 1/15/2011)

- Cancer
  - Eating healthy foods influences how one deals with certain types of cancer by: lowering the risk for the development of certain cancers, positively influencing and supporting cancer treatment and once treatment is complete I can help the individual live well for years.
- Food insecurity
  - In 2009 (latest data available) there were roughly 50.2 million Americans who lived in food insecure households, including 17.3 million children.<sup>5</sup>
  - In 2009 (latest data available) households with children reported food insecurity at roughly double the rate for households without children (21 percent compared to 11 percent).<sup>6</sup>

These chronic diseases can be treated successfully with access to nutritious food and knowledge for making healthy choices.

### **Setting the Stage for the Ask: Why Nutrition and Why Us?**

A combination of chronic diseases such as: diabetes, childhood obesity, stroke and cancer coupled with child malnutrition and hunger is slowly weakening the country's population while costing taxpayers billions.

- Nutrition is essential to combating these deadly and costly diseases. Proper nutrition makes it possible to maintain health and functionality later in life.
- Since the last White House Conference on Food and Nutrition, new nutrition related diseases have surfaced.
- Having a national conversation with the best policy makers in the country will both: shine a needed light on a serious problem and create the opportunity for serious dialogue and effective solutions to develop.

**For more information on the language of this bill visit:**

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-facts/hunger-and-poverty-statistics.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-facts/hunger-and-poverty-statistics.aspx>