

Public Policy in Dietetics 101

How advocacy efforts relate to YOUR profession, today and into the future!

WHO – WHAT – WHY – HOW?

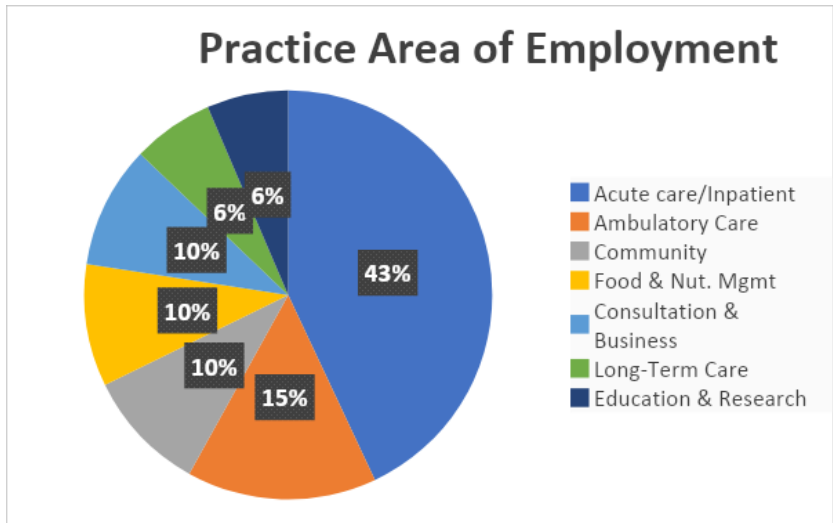
Who: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession through research, education, and advocacy. Advocating is critical to achieving the mission, vision, goals and strategies of the dietetics profession.

In Iowa, grassroots advocacy involves your Public Policy Committee, IAND Board and Council members, hundreds of Iowa registered dietitians and dietitian technicians, and our like-minded partner organizations.

What: To advocate means to promote what dietitians do and the value we provide (see the chart below)! We do this by communicating with State Legislators, specifically ones that represent you as a constituent; or, if you wish, you may also communicate with federal members of Congress.

The goal: to advance particular issues, causes, or policies.

Why: Food, nutrition and health are important to Iowans of all ages and stages of life! Did you know? Nationally, the wellness industry has exploded to become a \$4.5 trillion dollar industry, meaning that Americans are spending more money than ever to 'get healthy.'



Promoting the profession of dietetics helps us gain public traction as the **true experts in nutrition**. These efforts ensure that Americans will continue to have the experts in nutrition working for them with evidenced-based practice in a variety of ways.

How can YOU get involved?

There are numerous ways that dietitians/dietitian technicians can help ensure our profession remain prominent in the public policy arena:

1. Participate and connect with other dietitians in your Region.
2. Meet with your local Iowa Senator or Representative.
 - Find your Legislator: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>
 - Reach out, introduce yourself, and set a meeting. Face-to-face meetings show our representatives and senators just how passionate we truly are for the causes we support.
 - o Tell him/her what you do.
 - o Explain why it's important for dietitians to retain licensure through the State of Iowa, including:
 - Ensures consumers/patients are able to identify and access qualified professionals who demonstrate the knowledge, skill and competency necessary to provide safe and ethical nutrition therapy.
 - Separates RD/RDNs from others that may provide unsafe or inaccurate nutrition counseling or interventions that may lead to poor or even dangerous health outcomes, unnecessary, often expensive products or services.
 - RD/RDNs improve health outcomes.
3. Make your voice be heard! There are multiple national bills currently 'in play' before Congress, that need EVERY RD to support. To learn more, visit:
 - <https://www.eatrightpro.org/advocacy/take-action/action-center>
 - <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/advocacy/action-center>
4. Attend your state affiliate policy events to learn more about how to be an effective advocate for the profession by collaborating with RDNs in your state.
5. Track your representatives/senators via social media or sign up for their list-serves: Where are they, and what are they doing? Keep up to date!

TERMS TO KNOW

Advocacy: Public support for a particular cause or policy.

Bipartisan: Cooperation of two political parties that generally in place.

Constituent: This is you! And is based on the community you reside in.

Grassroots: Advocacy activity that happens at the local or community level.

Legislator: A leader in state office and a member of the House or Senate.

LPPC: The Legislative and Public Policy Committee. This committee is responsible for determining the public policy priorities for the Academy.

Member of Congress: A leader in federal office and a member of either the US House of Representatives or Senate.

Nonpartisan: Not biased or partisan, especially toward any particular political group.