

July 2010



# News Briefs

*This monthly news bulletin is designed to keep Maine Dietetic Association members informed about issues affecting our profession. We hope you find this resource helpful in staying up-to-date and in touch. Please send comments to [MDA Communications Coordinator](#).*

## **In This Issue:**

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## **Child Nutrition Takes Step Forward**

Improving children's nutrition and health is a priority of our association and our members. The federal Child Nutrition Act, which provides funding for the national school lunch and breakfast programs, WIC and other vital child nutrition programs, is an essential part of this effort.

The Child Nutrition Act currently is up for reauthorization in Congress, a process that includes revising and improving the law, and providing new funding for its programs. A strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill is a key step in addressing the health concerns of our nation's children, including hunger, childhood obesity and poor diet quality. This legislation is a key opportunity to help reach national goals to end child hunger by 2015 and solve child obesity in a generation.

The process took an important step forward in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 15, when the Education and Labor Committee passed a bipartisan reauthorization bill that truly improves the law. This new version, titled Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act, contains many key provisions, including one that establishes national professional standards for school nutrition personnel. Other provisions expand nutrition standards to all foods sold in schools; strengthen nutrition education in child nutrition programs; increase meal reimbursement rates for meals meeting specific nutrition standards; and bolster nutrition guidance for child care providers.

ADA members were recognized during the committee's debate. During discussion of the professional qualifications provision, Rep. Jared Polis of Colorado said: "The American Dietetic Association recommends that Directors of the School Nutrition Program at the district level should be certified as Registered Dietitians, Dietetic Technicians, Registered, or School Nutrition Association School Nutrition Specialists."

The bill now goes to the full House of Representatives for a vote, and then to the Senate. Now is the time for MDA members to contact our members of Congress and urge them to pass the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act this summer. You can join this effort by going to ADA's [Grassroots Manager](#) for talking points and an e-mail template to send a message to your Congressional representatives. Let your voice be heard and help make a difference!

## MDA Public Policy Plan

In order to increase the role of dietetic professionals in key public policy issues concerning nutrition, The Maine Dietetic Association Board is developing a new Public Policy Plan for 2010-2013. The key provisions support our Vision and Mission statements.

### VISION:

MDA members are recognized as Maine's most valued source of nutrition services and information, and are sought-after partners in initiatives to improve the health of Maine people.

### MISSION:

To promote and support Maine Dietetic Association members as the State's nutrition experts.

The following goals were selected for the purpose of developing relationships with our legislators so that our representatives turn to MDA for credible and useful information and that we are recognized as a trusted advisor. We firmly believe that our representatives must know who we are and what we stand for and that ongoing meaningful contact is essential. We recognize that many of our members are personally and professionally involved in many policy areas. Our plan to establish an MDA presence has three components:.

#### **1. To forge a relationship between MDA and every State Legislature member so we are at the table when they request input**

Our goal is to reach at least 40 State House and Senate Members by start of the 125<sup>th</sup> Legislature in January. Establish these contacts so that Legislative Day is NOT the first time we meet our legislative members.

#### **2. To forge a relationship between MDA and our Congressional members so we are at the table when they request input:**

Our goal is to assign members to each Congressional office. Encourage and when able plan for student involvement. These assignments are:

**Congresswoman Chellie Pingree:** Marcy Kyle and Mary Emerson

**Congressman Michael Michaud:** Connie McLellan and Katherine Musgrave

**Senator Olympia Snowe:** Patsy Catsos and Pat Watson

**Senator Susan Collins:** Eileen Molloy, Kathy Eagan and Marcy Kyle

#### **3. Promote an annual Legislative Day in Augusta**

Goal: At least 30% member participation. In the coming months, we will contact First Lady Karen Baldacci for input in setting up a Legislative Day. A subcommittee to assist with Legislative Day will include one MDA board member, one Public Policy Panel member and one non-board MDA member. We will encourage student involvement and update members of purpose and plans for Legislative Day in monthly news briefs.

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## Leaders Wanted

MDA has several outstanding opportunities for those who would like to help lead our association. Before considering any of the volunteer positions listing below, consider this:

### **Top Four Reasons to Participate in MDA Leadership Activities**

1. Make and keep professional contacts, especially important if you are new to the profession, between jobs, or doing a stint as a stay-at-home parent.
2. Make a difference to the health and well-being of Maine people by advocating for nutrition issues and the profession.
3. Make a difference to the effectiveness of the MDA. You probably have some new ideas that the board needs to hear!

Make friends and enjoy the camaraderie of working with other MDA members toward our common goals.

**Here are the positions:**

**Public Relations Chair** needed to arrange MDA representation at occasional events and to publish press releases to the media as needed. This person sits on the board of directors, and should ideally attend monthly telephone board meetings. This is a three-year term. Active or retired members are eligible.

**Secretary** needed to finish an unexpired term that end on May 31, 2011. Secretary should have computer skills and be able to attend monthly telephone board meetings. Active or retired members are eligible.

**Fundraising Chair** needed to organize one or more fundraisers for the MDA, with a fundraising goal of approximately \$2000 per year. This is an appointed position, and is not a voting board member, so would only attend telephone board meetings as needed. Active, retired, or student members are eligible.

**Awards Chair** needed to coordinate nominations and selection of recipients for annual awards. This is an appointed position, and is not a voting board member, so would only attend telephone board meetings as needed. Active, retired, or student members are eligible.

**Host** for district advocacy training meeting needed in York County and/or Northern/Downeast Maine. One-time commitment. Free space for small meeting and access to internet are necessary. Good opportunity for someone interested in learning more about public policy or the art of advocacy. Active, retired, or student members are eligible.

To learn about these opportunities to serve our profession and to gain valuable leadership experience, contact Patsy Catsos at [patsycatsos@gmail.com](mailto:patsycatsos@gmail.com)

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## Recipe Contest for Health Professionals from Cabot Cheese

Research shows families who eat together, eat better. So the Cabot Creamery Cooperative is asking their colleagues in the nutrition and health professions to help families do just that! Send Cabot your Feel Good Family Recipe and you'll be entered to win one of seven top prizes including a Grand Prize valued at more than \$15,000.

This contest is open to dietitians, dietetic students/interns, certified diabetes educators, nurses, physicians and pharmacists to highlight the importance and value of a well-balanced diet for today's active-lifestyle.

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## Free Webinar

New Directions in Lactose Intolerance: Moving from Science to Solutions

July 30, 2:30-4 pm

Sponsored by the National Dairy Council

For brochure and registration information, go to:

<http://www.eatrightmaine.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/lactose.pdf>