

April, 2011

Issues Update-112th Congress

ADA BUDGET ACTIVITIES

1. Submitted comments to House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committees
2. Submitted comments to House and Senate Health Appropriations Committees
3. Meet with members of Congress to ask for support of Prevention Funding, including Chair of the House Health Appropriations Committee
4. Signed on to several support letters-
 - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) request to Congressional leadership to maintain funding.
 - As partners in the National Salt Reduction Initiative (NSRI), we, the undersigned, recommend that the US Food and Drug Administration create, maintain, and make publicly accessible a comprehensive national product-specific nutrition database that will allow for the transparent and timely assessment of changes in the nutrient content of foods sold in the United States.
 - As part of the CDC Coalition, we urged HHS Appropriators to provide at least \$7.7 billion for CDC's FY 2012 "core programs".
 - Letter to Congress to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve standards for physical education.

FY 2011 Wrapped Up, Still More Bumps on the Budget Road Ahead

After months of discussions, meetings, amendments and long nights, Congress agreed on FY 2011 Budget. There will be reductions to many areas to meet the spending limit that was set. The Budget news will continue to flood the media, the tweets and the airwaves talking about FY12, FY 13 and the debt ceiling will come to vote this summer. We will continue to provide specifics as they become available.

The FY 2012 Budget

The official President's budget request for FY 2012 was released in February. Usually Congress can choose how it wants to craft its budget using what it wants from the President's budget and discarding the rest. The FY 2012 budget battle became very clouded with the release of House Budget Committee Chair, Paul Ryan's (R-WI) budget-Path to Prosperity. With \$6 trillion in cuts over the next decade, Ryan's proposal captured headlines, with changes including changing Medicare to a voucher program and converting Medicaid and SNAP into a block grant to the states. The criticism of the President's budget is that it did not reduce enough of the spending. Critics of Mr. Ryan's feels it unfairly targets programs for middle and low-income, elderly, and disabled Americans. The funding levels for these areas are slashed deeply, accounting for 88% of the savings in his FY 2012 budget. Everything else either sees relatively small cuts, or, in the case of Social Security and defense, sees no cuts compared to the President's budget.

(Editor's note-Mandatory spending levels are written into law and do not have to be voted on every year. But for discretionary spending levels, the budget resolution is most important, and must go through the yearly appropriations process. Many want to make it part of deficit reduction discussion since mandatory spending is not voted every year.)

Ryan's plan was adopted by the House by a 235-193 vote and has spurred a flurry of other plans. Both the House Budget Committee Democrats and the House Progressive Caucus released their own budget plans, and several budget resolutions are being drafted in the Senate.

The Debate on the Debt Ceiling and Implications for the Budget

The collision between these two budget plans may take place as part of the debt ceiling debate. With federal borrowing rapidly approaching the \$14.294 trillion debt limit this discussion must take place before a government default will occur around July 8.

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AT A GLANCE

BILLS IN CONGRESS-

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

1. Older Americans Act-Work with ADA members who work in these programs and help them invite members of Congress to visit the programs.
2. Medical Food Equity Act –Ask your Senator to sponsor S.311 and your Representative to sponsor H.R. 1311
3. HeLP-Continue to respond to Action Alerts when issued to retain Prevention Funding.
4. White House Conference on Food and Nutrition Act-Read the bill and become familiar with the content. Start thinking of ways this would help your community
5. Access to Frontline Health Care Act of 2011-Ask your Representative to sponsor this bill- H.R. 531



What Legislative Actions Have Occurred Since PPW?

As you might remember we had three main legislative pieces on our agenda: the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, the passage of the Medical Food Equity Act and the support of the Senate HeLP bill. Because of the intensity and the amount of time spent on the budget, not too much has happened on these bills. However, we do have our plan and our moving forward.

Older Americans Act (OAA)

For the OAA we are working on several fronts including asking the other major nutrition and aging organizations to co-sign a letter to the Congressional leaders to make this a priority, exploring having the North Carolina Dietetic Association host a reception for Virginia Foxx ,chair of the House subcommittee for this bill, leveraging our relationships with Senators Mark Kirk and Al Franken along with staying connected to Senator Harkin's staff. We also will continue to work with our key DPGs in this area, Healthy Aging (HA) and Dietetics in Health Care Communities (DHCC). Finally we will continue our services and help to the Administration on Aging to identify creative innovative program ideas.

Medical Food Equity Act

The Medical Food Equity Act now has been introduced in both chambers. Introduced in the Senate *Medical Foods Equity Act of 2011*(S.311) by Mr.(s) Kerry, Schumer and Menedez and Ms. Gillibrand. The companion has made its way into the House (H.R.1311) with sponsors of Representatives Baldwin, Jackson-Lee, Johnson (GA), Johnson (TX) Polis and Wasserman Schultz. The links to the bills are <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d112:./temp/~bdwPNR::|/home/LegislativeData.php>

Please make copies of the bills and encourage your Representative and Senator to become a supporter.

HeLP

The HeLP America Act S.174 introduced by Senator Harkin aims to improve the health of Americans and reduce health care costs by reorienting the Nation's health care system toward prevention, wellness, and health promotion. Although passage is probably not likely, it shines a spotlight on the need for prevention in reducing health care costs.

NEW BILLS

H.R.1382 - White House Conference on Food and Nutrition Act

It has been more than 40 years since the last White House Conference in this area. The purpose of the Conference would be *"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"*.

H.R. 531 Access to Frontline Health Care Act of 2011 -Introduced into House by Representative Bruce Braley of Iowa. This important bill would reduce health disparities by providing loan forgiveness to health practioners including dietitians.

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ADA COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

A recent study found that though most government relations professionals report spending very little time on coalition building, the strategic alliances promote more efficient, effective lobbying tactics.

ADA is a member of several coalitions to help leverage our efforts. Here are few of the ones we are currently working with and some recent activities with our partners.

DIABETES ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (DAA)

The DAA's mission is to unite and align key diabetes stakeholders around key diabetes related policy and legislative effort to elevate diabetes on a national agenda. Members include ADA, AADE, ADiaA, Novo Nordisk and the Endocrine Society.

The recent activities include an awareness campaign focused on diabetes prevention on Capitol Hill. Efforts included media campaign and Congressional reception hosted by DAA and the Diabetes Caucus which is made up of members of Congress.

Next Activity- Hill Briefing with the focus to provide an overview of diabetes (type 1 and type 2), the projections of prevalence and cost, highlight the NDPP and DPP-like programs as one potential solution to the growing epidemic of type 2 diabetes in America, and the role of the employer to promote wellness. Maggie Powers, RD PhD has been invited to be a panel member for this briefing.

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR NUTRITION AND ACTIVITY (NANA)

The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity is a collection of 230 groups who collectively advocate for national policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity to help reduce the illnesses, disabilities, premature deaths, and costs caused by diet and inactivity-related diseases. Those diseases include heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. ADA is a NANA steering committee member with this group. NANA has been very active and effective in getting Child Nutrition Reauthorization passed; this group is now working on the implementation of this historic piece of legislation.

NATIONAL FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ALLIANCE (NFVA)

The National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance (NFVA) are public and private partners working collaboratively and synergistically to increase nationwide access to and demand for all forms of fruits and vegetables for improved public health. The vision of NFVA is that fruits and vegetables comprise half of the food that Americans eat. Recent activities include presentating at the Produce for Better Health Foundation meeting to help showcase ADA members' creative and innovative activities to meet this goal.

NATIONAL COALITION OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE RESEARCH (NC-FAR)

NC-FAR, an organization that offers a unified voice for sustaining and enhancing federal funding for food, nutrition and agricultural research, extension and education. Several issues were discussed during this meeting including the need to maintain the funding levels of food and nutrition research. The outcomes of this type of research validates the interventions are effective and cost saving. Also at this meeting Dr. Catherine Woteki USDA's Undersecretary for Research, Education, & Economics (REE) presented her comprehensive strategy plan. Dr. Woteki, also a RD and one of the highest ranking members in the federal government brings our voice to USDA with her extensive understanding of the role of food and nutrition in agriculture issues.