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Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Public Policy Panel Guidebook 2015-2016



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Introduction to SCAND Public Policy Partners

South Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (SCAND) is committed to improving health in South Carolina and advancing the profession through research, education and advocacy. Public policy and advocacy are core functions of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) and SCAND. Both are critical to achieving the mission, vision, goals and strategies of the Academy. Public policy significantly influences and shapes the public image of the Academy and that of the nutrition and dietetics profession.

The goal of the Academy is to help improve the health of Americans and to ensure that the public trusts and chooses Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) and Nutrition and Dietetic Technicians Registered (NDTRs) as food and nutrition experts. Public policy and advocacy efforts can enhance the value of the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and position the RDN to the forefront of the policy process by passing effective legislation and issuing regulations that support the Academy's priorities.

What is a Public Policy Partner (PPP)?

A Public Policy Partner (PPP) is a dietitian member of SCAND who agrees to personally contact their legislator several times a year to establish regular communication about who dietitians are, what we do, and why we are the nutrition experts!

What do you have to do?

The SCAND Public Policy Panel will provide you with basic training on how to communicate with your legislator, including talking points, template emails, and phone scripts. We ask that you contact (by phone, email, or in person) your legislators under the direction of the SCAND Public Policy Panel. You will then be asked to enter brief info about these contacts into a database so we can keep track of the relationships that are being built between our members and legislators. We will also encourage you to attend our annual Policy/Legislative Day in Columbia in the spring and other policy-related events.

What do you get out of it?

Legislators make decisions about our future every day and many times these decisions have to do with health and nutrition, an area they know little about, but one you know A LOT about! We want YOU to be their GO TO person to ask when anything comes up about the health, wellness, or nutrition of South Carolinians. It is important that ALL dietitians have a relationship with their legislator so that if an important nutrition policy emerges, you already have established rapport with the decision makers! As a bonus, being involved in nutrition policy is a great resume builder!

What's next?

If you agree to be a Public Policy Partner, we will be in touch with you regularly to provide training and materials to initiate contact with your legislator. We will have a training webinar and check in with you periodically to be sure you are feeling comfortable and confident in your role! We will also provide you with ideas and guidance for types of contacts to make with your legislator throughout the calendar year.

Your Role as an Advocate

Your elected officials and their staff in our state capitol are there for you. Voters like you elected them to office and it is the central focus of an elected official's job to respond to voter concerns. They need to hear from their **constituents** regarding issues of importance. They also need to hear from us about critical nutrition and health issues. We must be able to define our role as the expert in nutrition or others will define it for us.

Grassroots advocates raise the level of awareness regarding certain causes and issues at the local, state or federal levels. Unlike "direct lobbying," grassroots advocacy relies almost entirely on volunteers and not professional lobbyists to contact legislators and other government officials regarding specific issues involving legislation and regulations.

Grassroots advocacy is one of the most common forms of lobbying. It has become an increasingly popular way for associations to harness the thoughts and ideas of their members in order to create change within the public policy sphere of influence. Many legislative and regulatory issues have been identified and addressed because groups of dedicated individuals made their voices heard.

Your elected representatives in the state legislature discuss legislation that is important to nutrition professionals routinely. Medicare and Medicaid coverage, child and older adult nutrition programs, agriculture and food access, licensure and managed care mandates all have impacts on the nutrition and dietetics profession.

By educating your representatives and sharing your personal experiences in practice, you can make a difference in our nation's health and nutrition policy.

SCAND Public Policy Panel Structure

On the SCAND Board, the Public Policy Panel is comprised of 2-3-year term Positions:

- Affiliate President (AP)
 - Cat Holley (2015-2016)
- Public Policy Coordinator (PPC)
 - Nina Crowley (2014-2017)
- State Policy Representative (SPR)
 - Kristen Quisenberry (2013-2016)
- State Regulatory Specialist (SRS)
 - Cindy Thomas (2016-2018)
- Consumer Protection Coordinator (CPC)
 - Katherine Shavo (2015-2017)
- Reimbursement Representative (RR)
 - Jamie Kandora (2014-2017)
- Delegate – Affiliate
 - Rita Haliene (2013-2016)

Additionally, we will be utilizing additional support positions to grow our Panel

- District Legislative Chairs
 - Columbia Midlands Dietetic Association (CMDA) Legislative Chair
 - Charleston Trident Dietetic Association (CTDA) Legislative Chair
 - Piedmont Dietetic Association (PDA) Legislative Chair
- Public Policy Panel Elect (to fill PPC, SPR, SRS on a rotating 3 year basis)
 - SPR-Elect – Rebecca Fuller
- Public Policy Partners Coordinator
 - Ashley Galloway (2015-2017)
- Federal Issues Assistant
 - Stephanie Simms
- State Issues Assistant
 - Stephanie Wadsten

South Carolina Specifics

South Carolina State Legislature

- The legislature is composed of two branches:
 - The House of Representatives: 124 part-time members each elected for up to six 2-year terms (even years)
 - As of January 2016, the current House membership is made up of 78 Republicans and 46 Democrats.
 - The majority were elected in November 2014, and their terms expire November 2016
 - The Senate: 46 members elected for up to three 4-year terms
 - As of January 2016, the Senate is made up of 28 Republicans and 18 Democrats
 - The majority were elected in November 2012, and their terms expire November 2016
- The Website <http://www.scstatehouse.gov>

This website is the home base for all of South Carolina's legislative information including the House of Representative & Senate rosters, current and past legislation, and legislative calendars. From this website you can also find your legislator and sign up for updates on current legislation.

- The Daily State Meeting Schedule
- The Daily House Meeting Schedule
- The ability to watch the Senate, House, and Committees in session
- Calendars
- Journals
- Information on committees
- Tools to find your legislator, research voting records and contact your legislator.

How to Sign up for Newsletters/Social Media Sites:

- Search on the legislator name to see if they have a website; follow the prompt to sign up for their newsletter and social media sites.

South Carolina Health Statistics

- Average Inpatient Cost per Day in South Carolina: \$1961.00
 - Source: 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 AHA Annual Surveys. Copyright 2015 by Health Forum LLC, an affiliate of the American Hospital Association, available at <http://www.ahaonlinestore.com/ProductDisplay.asp?ProductID=637>.

- Total Medicaid Spending by the State of South Carolina: \$5,552,937,136
 - Source: Urban Institute estimates based on data from CMS (Form 64) (as of 6/2015).
- South Carolina Medicaid Expansion by Time Increment:
 - 1990-2001: 12.4%
 - 2001-2004: 8.8%
 - 2004-2007: 1.5%
 - 2007-2010: 7.5%
 - 2010-2014: 1.8%
 - Urban Institute estimates based on data from CMS (Form 64) (as of 9/30/2014).
- “No Routine Checkup in Past Two Years by State and Race/Ethnicity 2006-2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006-2008.”
 - Of the percentage that did not have routine checkup in past two year:
 - White: 28.7
 - Black: 17.6
 - Hispanic: 34.9
 - Putting Men’s Health Care Disparities on the Map: Examining Racial and Ethnic Disparities at the State Level. Available at:
http://www.kff.org/minorityhealth/minority_racial_disparities_men.cfm.
- Percentage of Adult Obesity by State and Race/Ethnicity
 - White: 64.4%
 - Black: 74.8%
 - Hispanic: 75.1%
 - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014 Survey Results.
- Percentage of Adult Obesity by State and Gender
 - Male: 71.8%
 - Female: 62.4%
 - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014 Survey Results.
- Cases of Breast Cancer per 100,000 Women (in SC): 126.9
 - U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. United States Cancer Statistics: 1999-2012 Incidence and Mortality Web-based Report. Atlanta (GA): Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Cancer Institute; 2015.
- Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Births (in SC): 6.9
 - Source: Matthews, TJ, M.S., et. al. Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2013 Period Linked

Birth/Infant Death Data Set. Division of Vital Statistics. National Vital Statistics Report, Vol 64, No. 9, August 6, 2015.

- A study in the journal Health Affairs, noted that per person health care spending for obese adults is 56 percent higher than for normal-weight adults.
 - Over 15 years, the additional costs incurred by obese adults with private health insurance versus normal-weight adults increased from \$272 to \$1,244 per person per year.
- Many direct medical costs of the obese are paid by taxpayer dollars. Obesity attributable
expenditures for Medicare and Medicaid makeup 8.5 % and 11.8% of
- A sustained 10% weight loss will reduce an overweight person's lifetime medical costs by \$2,200–\$5,300
 - By lowering costs associated with hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and high cholesterol
- For 3 visits with a Registered Dietitian, the cost savings per patient with high cholesterol, over 8 weeks, is \$243.16 and \$1580.54 annually (as compared with medication only)
- Poor maternal nutrition is linked to several leading causes of infant mortality, including birth defects, preterm birth, fetal growth restriction, and maternal complications of pregnancy (preeclampsia, anemia, infections/ inflammation)

Overweight and obese adults are at increased risk for diabetes, hypertension, stroke, certain cancers, heart disease, high cholesterol, gall bladder disease, sleep apnea, depression, osteoarthritis and asthma.

Obesity rates in South Carolina have more than doubled since 1990, with almost two-thirds of our adult citizens considered overweight or obese. In addition,

- In 2009, three out of every five South Carolina adults (nearly 66%) are either overweight or obese. Twenty-nine percent are obese.
- Of those South Carolinians who are overweight or obese, 37.5% have high blood pressure, 11.7% have diabetes, and 5.1% have coronary heart disease.
- The economic impact of obesity and overweight population in terms of illness, diseases and lost productivity is significant.
- In 2003, obesity-related medical expenditures for adults in South Carolina total over \$1 billion, with over half of the costs being financed by Medicaid and Medicare.
- Nearly one third of high school students (31%) in South Carolina are overweight or obese.
- Approximately one half of all African American children in rural areas of South Carolina are overweight or obese.
- If current trends continue, one out of three children born in the year 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes primarily due to poor diet and lack of physical activity.

Tips for Talking with your Legislators

SCAND encourages its members to reach out to their State Legislators and establish relationships. By establishing relationships with legislators we are able to:

- Establish Registered Dietitians as credible, licensed experts in the health care delivery system.
- Position RDs as a critical link in the Affordable Care Act for food and nutrition expertise and as partners to other members of the medical profession.
- Build a reputation for SCAND and its RD/RDNs and DTRs members as a leading voice in health care policy.

The stronger your relationship is with a particular legislator, the more the legislator will respect you and listen to you. Even if there is not a specific bill on the horizon, members can (and should) talk to their legislators regularly about their professional practice and the value of the Registered Dietitian to the health care delivery system.

The key principle to remember in working with elected officials is they are driven by their perceptions of what their voters want. These perceptions are formed by a combination of what they observe in:

- letters, emails and phone calls from constituents
- meetings with constituents
- town meetings or other public forums with constituents
- meetings with political allies
- meetings with lobbyists
- media coverage
- social media
- research conducted by their staff members
- their own surveys of voters

Almost every one of these interactions creates an opportunity for you to influence elected officials' perceptions about the importance of nutrition and health issues to their constituents.

Core Principles

“All politics is local”: This cardinal rule was often repeated by a life-long political player, former Speaker of the House "Tip" O'Neill. It means that federal policy is impacted at a local level and that local examples can often provide a more meaningful picture than national statistics. It also means that the involvement of local people and organizations will get the attention of the official more effectively than a contact in Washington. Additionally, local voters, local newspapers and local TV stations are as important, if not more important, to an elected official as party leaders or political power brokers. This is why it is so important to have patients, health leaders in your community and the leaders of business and other organizations in your area speak on behalf of your issue. If you are involved in other

leadership positions in your community (e.g. on a hospital Board, a member of Rotary, PTA officer, etc.) mention that along with your professional affiliation. Every communication with your elected official should contain local information.

A picture is worth a thousand words: Another aspect of this personal style of grassroots activism is the power of visual images. A photograph, a video clip, a graph or a picture drawn by a child can capture a story more vividly than a page full of text. Visual images are tremendously effective not only in TV, but are also effective attached to a letter, included in a handout or flyer at a town meeting, in a newsletter and in social media posts. Once you have identified relevant anecdotes and personal stories, put some thought into how you can capture them visually.

Be open and honest in all communications: Your credibility is essential. If elected officials find that they cannot completely trust your information, then you and all of your Academy colleagues will be suspect in the future. Don't let your passion for the subject matter lead to exaggeration. And if you don't know, say so and get back with more information promptly.

The power of the personal appeal: Another saying is that “all politics are personal.” Find out as much as possible about the personal links to nutrition and health issues of those you want to influence. For example, making a connection through an elected official's or staff member's personal or family experience with diabetes, geriatric malnutrition or heart disease can make your message much more powerful and memorable. By identifying these personal experiences, you often tap an emotional nerve and awaken a dormant source of strong support. However, be aware of the sensitive nature of this type of information.

Know the issue: Before you make any contact with an elected official, the SCAND Policy Panel will provide you with the information you need to answer potential questions. If it is regarding specific legislation, we will let you know where the bill stands (e.g., is it in committee, awaiting a floor vote or in a conference committee?).

The media machine and its influence: Daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, TV news, radio and TV talk shows and social media all play an important role in working with elected officials. You can use them to carry your messages far and wide and you can also use them to convince your elected officials that a specific nutrition and health issue is on the public agenda. Be sure to clip letters-to-the-editor or editorials from newspapers that support your position or human interest articles that focus on your issue. Include them in the written information packet you leave behind after a meeting or attach them to a letter. You can also mention a TV news story or radio talk show that examined your issue to show that it is of interest to a wide range of people. Make the point that the media coverage of the issue

will help make the general voting population more interested and that you can help them stay ahead of the issue.

Boost your visibility with social media: With the majority of members of Congress using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, these venues for communication provide many opportunities to stay engaged with legislators. Be sure that your social media communications adhere to the Academy's Social Media Policy (available here: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/about-us/our-policies/social-media-policy>) when advocating on behalf of the Academy, your affiliate, DPG or MIG.

It all adds up: The core principle here is that every additional letter, every additional phone call, every contact creates a stronger and stronger perception that dietetics professionals are a force to be reckoned with. This underscores the importance of getting others involved to multiply the impact. When the staff of an elected official receives several letters or calls on a topic, they may take note. When they receive hundreds or thousands, they know it is an issue they must confront. Quantity matters.

Know your allies and your opposition: In addition to recruiting fellow dietetics professionals to get involved and make personal contact with legislators, it is important to establish as broad a base as possible by forming alliances with other groups who support your cause. For example, local chapters of the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society may be very supportive on medical nutrition therapy coverage issues. Community child welfare organizations may be supportive of issues relating to changes in structure of the Medicaid and WIC programs. Meet with their legislative leaders to identify areas of common ground and to enlist their support in writing letters, making phone calls, sending emails and attending public meetings. On the other hand, be prepared for opposing views. Identify the organizations that can mobilize voters and be prepared to refute their message points. Understand the factors that motivate your opposition and point it out to legislators in a fair, open way.

Following Up and Staying in Touch

Once you have established a relationship, stay in touch with elected officials and their staff members. Look for ways to become a trusted source of nutrition information whenever a nutrition issue arises.

- Write thank you letters for meetings and site visits promptly.
- When an elected official speaks out favorably on your issue or votes in committee or on the floor, write, call or email to acknowledge the support.

- If an elected official has been especially supportive, attend a campaign fundraiser and bring along as many colleagues as possible. Be sure to make your presence known at the fundraiser.
- When new information supporting Academy positions is available, send it promptly and follow up with a phone call.
- If you see a letter-to-the-editor or op-ed piece in your newspaper supporting the Academy's position on an issue, clip it and send it along with a letter.
- Peer-reviewed professional journals are always a respected source of information. If you see a journal article that supports an issue, send it to the elected official along with a brief letter in which you explain the implications in lay terms. As always, use personal, local examples to illustrate the point.
- Be creative! Look for opportunities to stay in touch that will reinforce the need for effective nutrition and health policy.

Talking points

- Registered dietitians are the food and nutrition experts!
- RDs are committed to helping the public enjoy a healthy life by providing the most accurate, credible and timely food and nutrition information
- The Affordable Care Act seeks to improve the health of Americans and nutrition is fundamental to that process
- Basic nutrition and nutrition counseling and services can prevent, delay onset, manage and offset many costly diseases and conditions
- Nutrition is the cornerstone of preventive strategies
- South Carolinians and the nation have paid a price for overlooking/ignoring food and nutrition
 - South Carolinians are increasingly overweight and undernourished
 - Lack of knowledge, people do not know how many calories they should eat
 - Healthcare results in astronomical costs
 - Nutrition is a factor in many medical conditions
 - Obesity-related health problems leads to many chronic diseases
 - Food safety issues are being reported more frequently
 - Fad diets are counterproductive
 - SCAND supports greater emphasis on physical exercise in schools and adult programs
- RDs are the source of credible and useful information
 - Provide expert guidance that is personalized, doable, practical, affordable
 - Know what works/doesn't work
 - Cut through the clutter of information

- Lifeline to eating right
- Are part of successful treatments of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, & kidney disease
- You can give your Legislator flyers on nutrition topics such as:
 - Why are Registered Dietitians Important to South Carolina?
 - Top Ten Reasons Why Consulting with a Registered Dietitian Can Benefit You
 - <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/resources/learn-more-about-rdns/10-reasons-to-visit-an-rdn>
 - RDs Your Most Credible Source of Nutrition Information
 - RDs Promoting Health Through Food & Nutrition Expertise
 - How Is an RD Different Than a Nutritionist

Sample Effective Messages

- “I am a registered dietitian nutritionist and I work in... and primarily focus on....”
- “I am passionate about this program because...”
- “My background and expertise tell me that this is important because...”
- “We have done thorough research and our profession is united on these issues.”
- “We have reviewed all of the cost implications and have provided that data for you.”
- “Some of the opposition you can expect on this issue include these main points (list the points and the potential groups that would be opposed to your issue.)
- “Utilizing the registered dietitian nutritionist in this health care reform program will ensure optimum success with preventive care.” (Show them how).
- “Similar measures have been enacted in other states with positive results.” (List them.)
- “We have met with the opposition and have worked out a compromise.”
- “We have attempted to work out a compromise but the opposition is unwilling to meet/compromise.”
- Use messaging that relates your position back to the district or state. Talk about how the bill or regulation will affect “x” amount of people in the congressman/woman’s district or state. Talk about how much money would be saved in their district or state if policy “x” or bill “y” were implemented.

Sharing your Stories

It is often said that, “facts make you credible. Stories make you memorable.” Policymakers rarely make decisions based on facts alone. There are multiple influences on the decision making process and as legislators are inundated with information on a wide variety of topics, the right story can be very

effective in highlighting your issue and influencing legislators.

Some tips for telling effective stories include:

- **Be purposeful:** Use your story to illustrate a key success or challenge in your work. For example, if advocating for legislation ensuring adequate supply of medical foods, a story of a local patient at the Veterans Administration hospital impacted by a shortage of tube feeding formula can be easily understood. To make sure the purpose of your story is clear, follow this by saying, “I’m telling you this story because...”
- **Be strategic:** In the above example, a story from a veteran may be particularly salient to a Member on the Veteran’s Affairs Committee. If your legislator was an educator and you are advocating for child nutrition programs, telling a story about the impact of school breakfast and lunch on a student’s academic achievement may also garner more interest. Develop stories of economic benefit and impact as well. For example, if you provided MNT counseling for a client who was able to manage their diabetes well enough to be able to return to work, that is a powerful story.
- **Make an emotional connection:** Members of Congress and their staff rely heavily on real constituent stories. Be judicious in your approach, as you don’t want to bring policymakers to tears or have them feel that the problem is insurmountable. But the right emotional connection can bring them to understand the real life consequences of inaction or action regarding the issue for which you are advocating.
- **Focus on one person or family:** While it is extremely important to educate legislators as to what registered dietitian nutritionists do, remember to focus on the impact of your work and not just a description of your work. Telling a story of an individual, family or even a community that you have helped and how you helped, allows policymakers to better understand the on-the-ground impact of the work of registered dietitian nutritionists.
- **Justify their involvement:** The stories you tell should clearly connect with your “ask” and should convey how the policymaker’s action will lead to concrete improvement to the lives of their constituents and within their community.

Speaking at a Public Meeting

- Determine the purpose and tone of the event. Research the background and position statements of the official and/or organization sponsoring the public meeting and request the agenda and speaker information in advance.
- It is important to consider the views of your agency official/legislator. Consider what you would want to know in order to use this meeting to your benefit.
- What are the political and substantive benefits of your proposal? What do they need to learn about you as a professional? What is the human side? How can they use this information to help the citizens of your state?

- Prepare a few brief points that you intend to communicate.
- Use messages that demonstrate how registered dietitian nutritionists are essential in health-care reform initiatives.
- Rehearsing your statement and/or question with colleagues in advance to ensure you are comfortable and convincing.
- Try to ask your question early in the meeting when time is less of a factor. Use your question to frame the brief comments you prepared in advance.
- Introduce yourself as a registered dietitian nutritionist or a dietetic technician, registered. If you are representing your affiliate include information about the number of members you represent in your affiliate.
- If deserved, commend the official for his or her work on health issues, particularly those related to prevention.
- Leave a copy of your key message with the official and his or her staff, along with your contact information.
- Be concise. Focus your message to a few sentences. Include the facts with information about your role as a dietitian and why your expertise is relevant.
- Be prepared for questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, simply communicate that you will research the information and follow up. Then, be sure to do so.
- Offer to be a resource for the policymaker and his or her staff. You have much to offer in areas of mutual interest and your expertise can make their jobs easier!
- Be respectful and be a good listener by allowing the official to speak. Have a conversation and productive dialogue.
- Be prepared to hear objections to your request. Find clever and respectful ways to say "Yes and...." or to refocus the topic.
- Include a personal story. Present your request, bolstered by facts and an example from your experience that includes the impact on real-life situations with people.
- Ask for a commitment. Closing the discussion with an anticipated response is effective. Remind them that you are there for a specific reason.

Contacting your Legislator

The SCAND Public Policy Panel will be providing you with scripts for how you contact your legislators. Below are sample phone and email requests. Remember to personalize your message as each Congressional office is different.

Initial Contact

- Contacting your member is easy. You can find your Representative and your Senators at: www.scstatehouse.gov. Just go to their website and find the phone number to the district office that is closest to you.
- Call the office and ask for the scheduler, you can ask to schedule a meeting over the phone or ask for an email address to send a written request.

Making the “Ask”

- When requesting a meeting via email remember to be concise and to the point; they read thousands of emails and receive hundreds of requests so you want to make sure and entice them with to-the-point messaging.
- Always make your messaging relevant to the district – If there’s one thing members like, it’s serving their constituents and fixing problems in the district.
- Strength in numbers – If at all possible try and schedule a meeting with a group of registered dietitian nutritionists or if you invite the member to your place of work try and have more than one RDN present. Having more than one RDN provides emphasis to the meeting and importance to the issues.
- State your name, your purpose and describe why you and your colleagues would like to meet with the member. A sample message script is provided below. If you are a constituent, be sure to mention in the introduction.
- State that you are requesting a 15 to 20 minute meeting or “brief meeting”. State that you will be bringing a group of registered dietitian nutritionists and/or dietetic technicians, registered from the district with you to the meeting. Many offices will ask for the names of the individuals planning to attend the meeting.
- The scheduler may ask for additional information, so be prepared. You may need to follow up with the scheduler via email, with any requested materials on the issues. If you need additional information from the Academy, contact the PPP leaders.
- Ask the scheduler for the name and email address of the scheduler and any key staff members who may be attending the meeting. The scheduler may ask you to follow up with each staff member in addition to setting up the meeting.
- If the scheduler asks you to identify the issues, you can indicate that you will provide them additional information about the specific issues to be discussed prior to the meeting and restate that you would like time to talk about the importance of these issues as they pertain to improving the health of Americans through food and nutrition.

Time to Meet

- *What to bring to the meeting*
 - You want to bring your leave-behind material for when the meeting/visit is finished.
 - Don't hesitate to bring along your talking points so you can point out relevant statistics or data points on issues. And bring along any additional information you feel is relevant.
 - Your positive attitude and passion for what you do. That's what you want them to see.
- *What to say in the meeting*
 - Familiarize yourself with the talking points/ issues and relate issues to what you do.
 - Have a personal and or professional story ready to tell, preferably one that relates to one of the specific pieces of legislation. Personal stories from the workplace always resonate more deeply than facts or figures. These members care about the people they represent and so by telling a story about one of their constituents (your patients/clients) you will make a stronger connection from the issue to the actual policy.
 - Always share your story **first** and then follow it with the relevant facts and figures.
 - Do not be afraid to say "I don't know". Nothing is worse than providing false information to a member/staffer. Remember you want to be viewed as a reliable source. Simply say "I'm not quite sure about that, but I can get you the answer later."

Follow-up contact

- Always follow-up 1 to 2 days later with a thank-you email to the scheduler; or member
- Reiterate your messaging on the things that were discussed in the meeting/visit.

Make sure to state that you will be reaching out the member's relevant staffer to answer any question that the member may have had or to provide any supporting materials that were requested.

Sample Phone Script – with scheduler

Hello my name is _____ and I'm a (Insert registered dietitian nutritionist or dietetic technician, registered) from the Senator/Representative's state/district. I would like to schedule a meeting with the Senator/Representative in DATE. I'm a member of the South Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – and we're the largest food and nutrition professional association in the state – with over 650 members working to improve the health of South Carolinians through food and nutrition.

I would like to schedule a meeting (*mention that you'll be bringing a group of registered dietitian nutritionists and/or dietetic technicians, registered from the state/district with you*) to discuss the Academy's positions on a number of important food and nutrition related issues.

Thank you.

Sample email

The scheduler may ask you to put your request in writing to him/her or one of the district staff. The following is a sample email message,

Dear XXX,

My name is _____ and I am a (Insert registered dietitian nutritionist or dietetic technician, registered) from the Senator/Representative’s state/district. I’m a member of the South Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – and we’re the largest food and nutrition professional association in the state – with over 650 members working to improve the health of South Carolinians through food and nutrition.

I would like to schedule a meeting (*mention that you’ll be bringing a group of registered dietitian nutritionists and/or dietetic technicians, registered from the state/district with you*) to discuss the Academy’s positions on a number of important food and nutrition related issues.

I know that the Senator/Representative cares deeply about improving the health of our state while lowering costs to the system. We agree and so we would greatly appreciate the Senator/Representative’s time to discuss how we as dietitians are working to accomplish these same goals every day. Please let me know when would work best for the Senator/Representative and staff to meet with us. If you have any additional questions, please let me know.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Insert your name, credentials
South Carolina Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Public Policy Partner

Closing the Loop by Reporting on Your Activity

Thank you for your advocacy efforts. As policy leaders, it is important for you to share your successes with the SCAND Public Policy team.

To report on your efforts, use the 'Legislative Contact Report' form weblink:
<http://tinyurl.com/legislativecontactreport>

Let others know about your advocacy work! Share your experiences about what worked most effectively and what points seemed to be most convincing. Send your pictures and success stories so that we can share our successes with other member leaders.

Legislative Contact Report

* Required

Name of SCAND member *

Type of legislator contacted *

US Senator
 US Representative
 SC State Senator
 SC State Representative

Legislator Contacted *

Date of contact *

Month Day 2014

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APPENDIX: Public Policy Resources

1. Academy Advocacy Website

The Policy Initiatives and Advocacy Web site provides updates on current policy activities.

www.eatright.org/advocacy

2. Health Care Reform Website

This website provides resources specific to health care reform so that your Public Policy Panel can help make a difference for public health in your state! <http://www.eatright.org/healthcarereform/>

3. Eat Right Weekly

Published electronically every Wednesday afternoon, this communication provides a summary of current government actions and activities across the nation that affects Academy members. All members receive a copy.

4. The Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Each month there is an article about a current public policy issue. Look for it in the Public Policy News pages. Academy members have free access to the online database by logging onto the Academy website at www.eatright.org and accessing the Journal website via the Member Center. Search for “public policy” to find articles relevant to your needs.

5. Library of Congress Website

Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information. The site provides access to accurate, timely and complete legislative information for Members of Congress, legislative agencies and the public. It is presented by the Library of Congress (LOC) using data from the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Printing Office, Congressional Budget Office and the LOC's Congressional Research Service. Congress.gov is usually updated the morning after a session adjourns. <http://beta.congress.gov>

6. Council of State Governments

This organization provides state officials in all three branches of government with the tools and strategies needed to implement effective policies and programs. They also work to build partnerships between governing entities and promote multi-state and regional cooperative ventures.

<http://www.csg.org/>

7. National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

NCSL tracks trends and current events in state legislatures. They provide issue briefs and a national perspective on the work of each state legislature. Content from NCSL is a resource for tracking an issue in the state legislature, ideas on what other states are doing and provide a national perspective on current policy initiatives.

www.ncsl.org

8. The Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD)

FPCD is a national coalition of which the Academy is a member. Several Academy affiliates have engaged in PFCD's state outreach programs. On the PFCD website, click on "Get Resources" for research and information on preventing chronic disease. Click on "In the Field" to see what PFCD is doing in your state.

<http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/>

9. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

Use this resource for data on a particular health issue. Compare your state's data to national figures and track issues over time. www.kff.org

10. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

This link takes you to RWJF's "F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2012." It provides detailed analysis and statistics on a topic that is a national priority.

<http://healthyamericans.org/report/100/>

11. County Health Rankings

This database provides health data on every county in the country, including obesity rate, smoking rate, morbidity and mortality rates, education levels, grocery store density and alcohol store density.

www.countyhealthrankings.org

12. USDA Food Environment Atlas

This interactive website provides county and state data on food accessibility, participation in food assistance programs, food insecurity, local foods and diabetes rates.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/foodatlas>

13. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC provides statistics and research on numerous health issues. Its website is an excellent and trusted resource for current data on the nation's health. www.cdc.gov

APPENDIX: Federal Agency Acronyms

AHRQ	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (part of HHS)
AoA	Administration on Aging
ATTTB	Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (part of US Department of Treasury)
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (part of HHS)
CFSAN	Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (part of FDA)
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (part of HHS)
CNPP	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (part of USDA)
CR	Continuing Resolution (mechanism for temporarily funding government)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERS	Economic Research Service (part of USDA)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization (part of the United Nations)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FEC	Federal Election Commission
FNB	Food and Nutrition Board (part of IOM)
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service (part of USDA)
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service (part of USDA)
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HAB	HIV/AIDS Bureau (in HRSA)
HELP	Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration (part of HHS)
IHS	Indian Health Service (part of HHS)
IOM	Institute of Medicine (part of NAS)
MCHB	Maternal and Child Health Bureau (in HRSA)
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NCHS	National Center for Health Statistics (part of CDC)
NIH	National Institutes of Health (part of HHS)
OMB	Office of Management and Budget (part of the White House)
PHS	Public Health Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USPTF	United States Preventive Services Task Force (part of AHRQ)
WHO	World Health Organization (part of the United Nations)

APPENDIX: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Acronyms

Academy	Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
ANDPAC	Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Political Action Committee
AP	Affiliate President
BOD	Board of Directors
CPC	Consumer Protection and Licensure Coordinator
DPG	Dietetic Practice Group
EAL	Evidence Analysis Library
FNCE®	Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo®
HOD	House of Delegates
LPCC	Legislative and Public Policy Committee
MNT	Medical Nutrition Therapy
NCS	Nutrition Services Coverage
PAL	Policy and Advocacy Leader
PIA	Policy Initiatives and Advocacy
PPC	Public Policy Coordinator
PPP	Public Policy Panel
PPW	Public Policy Workshop
RR	Reimbursement Representative
SPR	State Policy Representative
SRS	State Reimbursement Representative