

NUTRITION ELEVATED

Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM THE ADVOCACY PILLAR

Obesity – A Health Policy Issue: Let's Face the Dual Pandemic

By Jobaida Khanom, RDN, CD, LD

The Obesity Epidemic

When we think about obesity, we think of a sedentary lifestyle, fast-food culture, lack of physical activity, food insecurity, and health disparity. We blame environmental factors along with genetics and epigenetics. However, if we put these arguments and weight biases aside, we find another level of the severity of obesity in our healthcare system – increased risk of hospitalization and lower survival rates during this coronavirus pandemic. The CDC finds that, “obesity may triple the risk of hospitalization due to a COVID-19 infection” (CDC, 2020).

Apart from the impact on racial and ethnic minority groups, the 2019 CDC Adult Obesity Prevalence Map shows, “Obesity remains high – twelve states now have an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35 percent,” which is an increase from nine states in 2018 (CDC, 2020). Recently, Richardson, S., et al, published a study in JAMA that found the “most common co-morbidities were hypertension, obesity, and diabetes.” Among 5700 hospitalized patients, 1737 patients (41.7%) had a BMI ≥ 30 (obese) and 791 patients (19%) had a BMI ≥ 35 (morbidly obese). 320 patients (21%) died of COVID related issues (April 2020). **(continued on pages 8-10)**

2020 UAND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

This year, UAND presented \$500 scholarships to four deserving students.

Note: All quotes come from nomination materials submitted to the UAND Scholarship and Awards Committee.



Miley Nguyen

Miley is a first year student in the University of Utah's Coordinated Master's Program in Nutrition and Dietetics. She models the ideals of the health profession including excellence in academics, community involvement, and leadership ability. Miley is also working as a research assistant for Dr. Velayutham's lab Department of Nutrition and Integrative Physiology studying the benefits of dietary berries to the gut microbiome and vascular health. Miley's experience of moving to the U.S. from Vietnam informs her professional goals of becoming a clinically and culturally competent dietitian.

Gretal Tam

Gretal is a student in BYU's Didactic Program in Dietetics. She is highly driven to succeed at any task before her, shows immense creativity, and works well with others. She also carries a sense of humility with her that makes her approachable and allows her to demonstrate compassion towards others. She has a variety of relevant work and volunteer experiences and recently served as the leader of BYU's National Nutrition Month 2020. Gretal desires to help make health accessible to everyone and close the health disparity gap.



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Jessica Cortez

Jessica is a student in BYU's Didactic Program in Dietetics. While maintaining strong academic performance she has excelled as a TA and sought educational experiences outside of the classroom. She is a remarkable individual in every way. She actively listens, has good communication skills, and does work of the highest quality. Jessica's aspirations include working in a NICU or ICU and eventually pursue a PhD in nutritional biochemistry and metabolism.



Hailey Morris

Hailey is a first year student in the University of Utah's Coordinated Master's Program in Nutrition and Dietetics. Her strengths include academic excellence, strong verbal and written communication skills, and professionalism. Currently, Hailey is collaborating on a team Focused Area of Study project entitled: "Development of a Kitchen Education Program for U.S. Speedskating Athletes." Hailey is dedicated to volunteering, with significant contributions to University of Utah Athletics and New Mexico State University Athletics, as well as community outreach service to the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and Meals on Wheels organizations. UAND is happy to support Hailey's goals of working in either clinical or sports nutrition.

**Congratulations to Gretal, Hailey, Jessica,
and Miley!**

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Meet UAND member Sarah Gunnell Bellini PhD, RD!

How many years have you been a dietitian? How long have you been a member of UAND?

21 years and 13 years

Where do you currently work and what do you love about it?

Brigham Young University, I love working with and meeting so many amazing students!

How has UAND membership been of value to you and your career?

Networking! This is how the door opened up for me to go to graduate school which then opened up more doors.

What is the best advice that you have ever received?

Be yourself! You have gifts and talents that you will uniquely provide and help others.

How do you spend your free time?

Running, biking, and hiking with friends

What is your favorite book (or movie)?

Recently, "Boys in the Boat"

What advice do you have for young dietitians?

Don't be afraid to try new areas. Dietetics has so many options.

What's your favorite moment of your career so far?

While not one moment, I love seeing how all of my dietetics experiences are connected and the people I have worked with along the way.

What is your favorite recipe or food tradition?

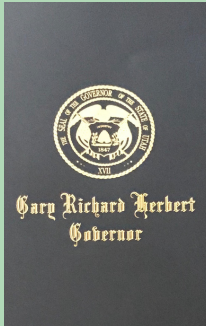
Making homemade pizza with my husband.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT QUESTIONNAIRE

Want to be featured? Complete your Member Spotlight Questionnaire [HERE](#)



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MORE



Utah Malnutrition Advocacy Taskforce (UMAT)

A group of multi-agency, interdisciplinary professionals focused on the prevention and treatment of malnutrition in Utah. Head to [this website](#) to check out the work being done in Utah and consider joining the taskforce!

Click on the icon above [or here](#) to learn more



POWER OF PAYMENT

eat right. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

New FREE Program for Academy Members!

No matter where you work, understanding the basics of healthcare payment and reimbursement for the services you provide is an asset to every RDN.

Opt in for monthly emails with valuable information, resources, and learning activities regarding reimbursement, payment for telehealth, alternative payment models, and more! [Learn more here.](#)

DOUBLE PUMPKIN CHILI

A delicious, seasonal stew highlighting both fresh and canned pumpkin.



Recipe developed by UAND member and Harmons Dietitian Ashley Quadros MS, RDN, CD. [Click here for the recipe.](#)





ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MORE

BREAKFAST & BRIEFING: FIGHTING HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITIES



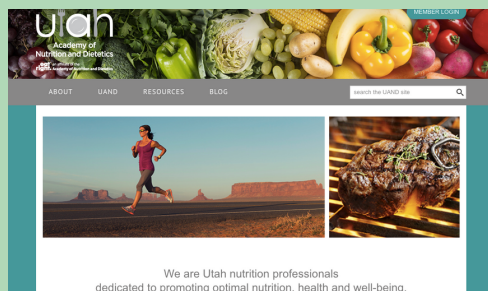
SAVE THE DATE: DECEMBER 8TH, 2020
TIME: TBD
WHERE: VIRTUAL

Join our Dairy West team as we take our annual Breakfast & Briefing event virtual for the first time! This year we're excited to host Clancy Harrison, MS, RDN, FAND, Founder of The Food Dignity Project, and TEDx Speaker as our keynote. Clancy's talk will reinvigorate attendees' sense of professional responsibility to improve food equity for everyone. We'll then hear from a panel of local Utah and Idaho food insecurity experts about their work and opportunities for getting involved.

More details and registration information coming soon! Please don't hesitate to contact Ann Lokuta at alokuta@dairywest.com if you have any questions.

CHECK OUT YOUR NEW WEBSITE!

eatrightutah.org



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website work for you?
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Be the first to get updates
and read your UAND
newsletter!



UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Get CEs and feed your curiosity

November 2-6, 2020

The Obesity Society

ObesityWeek® 2020 Interactive

<https://obesityweek.org>

November 6, 2020

Sports Medicine and Nutrition Virtual Webinar

"Sportsmetrics™ ACL Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation"

[Click Here](#) to register

December 8th, 2020

Breakfast & Briefing: Fighting Hunger in Our Communities

Time: TBD. See details in announcements above.



**Academy of
Nutrition and Dietetics**

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Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

OBESITY - A HEALTH POLICY ISSUE: LET'S FACE THE DUAL PANDEMIC

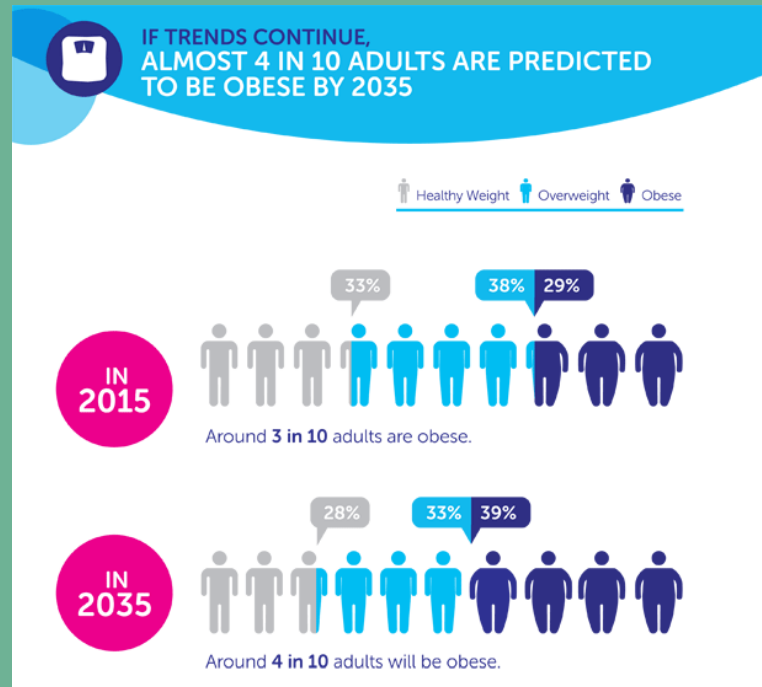
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(Continued from page 1)

According to the Obesity Action Coalition health policy agenda, "Obesity is a complex, multifactorial, and chronic disease, which requires a comprehensive approach to both prevent and treat. Obesity is a major contributor to a vast number of preventable deaths in the United States and it usually carries with it a large number of related conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, certain cancers, sleep apnea, and arthritis" (n.d).

Along with these established co-morbidities, social distancing, mental health issues, and depression are also affecting our obese population during the pandemic. According to an article published in The Obesity Society, "Persons with severe obesity who become ill and require intensive care (5% of infections) present challenges in patient management – more bariatric hospital beds, more challenging intubations, more difficult to obtain imaging diagnosis" (Ryan, et al, 2020).

When chances of becoming severely ill are high and people's lives are at stake, qualified and trained dietitians can team up with nurse practitioners and doctors to provide a comprehensive treatment such as intensive behavioral therapy along with authorized FDA-approved weight loss medication to ensure a clinically significant outcome.



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Health Policies to Fight Obesity

Two current pieces of legislation that could light our path to fighting obesity are the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act – 2019 and the expansion of the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2020.

The **Treat and Reduce Obesity Act** was first introduced in 2013 and re-introduced in 2019 by Rep. Ron Kind [D-WI]. House committees that are involved include Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means. Most recently, the bill was referred to the subcommittee on Health in March 2019 (Congress.gov, 2019). To become law this bill needs to pass in the house and senate, and be signed by the president.

OBESITY - A HEALTH POLICY ISSUE: LET'S FACE THE DUAL PANDEMIC

continued

As an interest group, we must continue work on Healthy People 2020 targets, which have become lost with the current pandemic. We must act on the call to include RDNs as qualified providers in the fight to prevent and treat obesity. All members of UAND and non-members are highly encouraged to go to the [Action Center \(click here\)](#) and let leaders in Congress know that you support these bills. Urge them to pass the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act – 2019 and the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2020. Passage of these bills will help us fight obesity, chronic disease, and make us better equipped to face the Coronavirus pandemic.

References

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capacity%20and%20reserve%20and%20can%20make%20ventilation%20more%20difficult.&text=As%20BMI%20increases%2C%20the%20risk,death%20from%20COVID-19%20increases.

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