

MINUTES

Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (ICHNR)

Thursday, May 18, 2023

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Location: ZoomGov Meeting

Co-Chairs Welcome & Introductions: RDML Paul Reed on behalf of ADM Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *AND* Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agriculture Research Service

RDML Reed provided a brief report on ODPHP and OASH activities related to “Food as Medicine.” He noted that there is broad interest in the topic among many agencies and sectors and that opportunities exist to leverage this effort to improve public health. While there are varied opinions on the meaning of and activities related to “Food as Medicine”, ODPHP and OASH are engaging with diverse groups to develop a registry of measures and best practices for research studies and strategies that can be incorporated into pilot programs. RDML Reed believes this initiative and the nascent HHS Food as Medicine Working Group will be a valuable engagement for ICHNR and its members, and in subsequent email communication, he encouraged those who are interested to contact Rachel Fisher at HHS ODPHP. RDML Reed also noted that the DGA process is underway and expressed appreciation for the work of its partners. RDML Reed concluded his opening remarks by reporting that the 2021 ICHNR response to the GAO report on federal strategies and coordination of diet-related efforts related to chronic health conditions was presented at a recent meeting with the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, ICHNR representatives, and OASH leadership – regarding coordinated work on nutrition research, as called for in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

Dr. Jacobs-Young reported on the launch of its [Agricultural Science Center of Excellence for Nutrition and Diet for Better Health](#) in support of the Administration’s Cancer Moonshot effort. This virtual center aims to deliver science-based solutions that promote and elevate food and nutrition security for all Americans. Dr. Jacobs-Young highlighted the center’s engagement with historically underserved communities.

CDC/NCCDPHP/Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) – Food is Medicine Work Summary: Ruth Petersen, MD, MPH, Director, DNPAO

Dr. Petersen presented and shared slides on CDC’s work supporting Food is Medicine activities. Priorities for CDC include ensuring that Food is Medicine includes population-level healthy food policies and programs and there is equitable access for all at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels. Dr. Petersen provided an overview of DNPAO’s funded programs: State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (SPAN), High Obesity Program (HOP), and Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH). With its funded programs DNPAO is looking to identify activities that work to reduce chronic disease and scale those to achieve broad impacts. Several REACH program recipients were noted as working on Food is Medicine topics. Dr. Petersen noted that

Food is Medicine is a life-course effort and needs to be addressed through that lens, including identifying policies and practices that effectively improve health and healthful eating choices in children. Dr Petersen concluded with a description of CDC's funded Nutrition & Obesity Policy Research & Evaluation Network (<https://nopren.ucsf.edu>).

Q&A

- Dr. Jacobs-Young encourage all to approach Food is Medicine activities with intentional thought and clarity, especially in terms of terminology; in the context of USDA “food is food”, and healthy eating is a strategy to reduce the need for medicines. RDML Reed agreed that a unified and consensus terminology is an important issue that ODPHP intends to address in its activities.
- Dr. Utech asked if using food insecurity as an entry point for activities in Food is Medicine is an accepted approach among ICHNR member agencies, or if emphasizing food insecurity was limiting. Dr. Petersen noted that it is important to frame Food is Medicine in a way that encompasses all its diverse aspects.
- Dr. Lynch suggested that Food is Medicine as a strategy and type of program effort needs to address both improving access to healthy food and also creating increased demand for healthy food through public health communications. Dr. Petersen noted that programs that cover all 50 states could strongly contribute to coordination and targeted communications.
- Dr. Ahluwalia shared an article in the Zoom chat: Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among Children and Adolescents in the United States, 2015–2018, NCHS Data Brief No. 391, November 2020.
- Dr. Jacobs-Young asked how ICHNR member agencies can become involved with the ODPHP Working Group on Food is Medicine. RDML Reed noted the Working Group is still being established, and that invitations for vetted representatives would be forthcoming. Any interested agencies that are not already involved can reach out to RDML Reed for more information.
- A question in the Zoom chat that went undiscussed was “Is healthful food a medical benefit, and if so, who is eligible?”

Agriculture and Diet: Value Added for Nutrition Translation and Adaptation in a Global Ecology: the ADVANTAGE Project: Dan Raiten, PhD, NICHD

Dr. Raiten presented and shared slides on a conceptual overview of the [ADVANTAGE Project](#) and a description of its structure and processes. The ADVANTAGE Project is intended to promote scientific research to better understand the intersection of climate/environmental change, food systems, diet, nutrition, and health. The core driver of the ADVANTAGE Project is that the development of sustainable and resilient diet/nutrition related, evidence informed guidance, recommendations, policy and standards of care to promote health and prevent disease, requires consideration of a) relevant health targets, b) an appreciation of what the population of interest is currently consuming, and c) an understanding of the food systems' capacity to meet the dietary needs of the target populations. The structure of ADVANTAGE includes an overarching Secretariat (staff at NICHD and partners at the Center for Dietetics), a Scientific Steering Committee, and thematic working groups co-chaired by academic researchers. The

working groups are coordinating a series of meetings/workshops, with the Translation and Implementation WG presenting next on June 12, 2023
(<https://web.cvent.com/event/4156da6a-09b4-4690-93ed-e798551c1717/summary>).

Q&A

- No questions were asked on this topic.

Proposed New Subcommittee on Nutrition Security: goal, scope, charge, and possible activities: Suggested Co-chairs -- Anne Utech, VA and Joanne Guthrie, ERS USDA

Drs. Utech and Guthrie presented and shared a slide outlining the proposed purpose for a Nutrition Security Subcommittee and current status towards its establishment. This subcommittee would gather from Agencies / Departments their operational definitions of Nutrition Security, their current measures, and evaluate the status of their nutrition security research. This focus would be distinct from Food Security / Insecurity definitions and activities. A focus area would be understanding aspects of inequity and underserved populations. Identification of Subcommittee members is proposed by July 2023, with data call activities beginning in Fall 2023 and a report presented to ICHNR by January 2024.

Q&A:

- Dr. Jacobs-Young and RDML Reed concurred in their support of creating this Subcommittee.
- Dr. Fleischhacker commended the leadership of Drs. Utech and Guthrie and commented that tracking where the agencies are in this space would be very helpful for research. Dr. Guthrie noted that there is significant interest and activity in this space across agencies, but there is not always clarity on what agencies are specifically doing – Subcommittee conversations with agencies should be helpful and beneficial for collaborations.
- Dr. Fleischhacker recommended that NSF be represented in this Subcommittee, as that agency works closely with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).
- *New Subcommittee proposal at next meeting:* Global Nutrition – Suggested Co-chairs: Susan Vorkoper, NIH/FIC and Ahmed Kablan, USAID

Discussion/Announcements

- Dr. Jacobs-Young and RDML Reed encouraged ICHNR to be more deliberative and visible in highlighting and sharing what the committee is doing. Enthusiasm was expressed to consider more outreach, for example a publication or letter from the co-chairs in a scientific or professional society journal. A suggestion was made to see if a piece could begin to be developed using documents already prepared.
- Dr. Starke-Reed reminded members to share any items that were discussed today via email.

- Members shared several brief updates and items:
 - Dr. Davis for the DRI subcommittee highlighted a new report: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/using-systematic-reviews-to-support-the-dietary-reference-intakes-a-letter-report>
 - Dr. Reedy noted a new article on the development of healthy eating index for toddlers was published: Development of the Healthy Eating Index-Toddlers-2020. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2023; DOI: 10.1016/j.jand.2023.05.013. An updated HEI for adults is also in development. Webinars on these updates are planned.
 - Twelve federal agencies have released a Food is Medicine Request for information: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-23-107.html>
 - Planning for a hybrid workshop on Nutrition and the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease at NIH is underway for July 12-13th– the registration page is now open: <https://www.scgcorp.com/nutrition-wksh-2023/>
 - The NIH The Common Fund Nutrition for Precision Health program announced they were open for enrollment this week - <https://nutritionforprecisionhealth.org>
 - USDA announced the appointment of Manjit K. Misra as the new Director of NIFA: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2023/04/24/usda-announces-new-national-institute-food-and-agriculture-director>
 - Susan Mayne, Director of CFSAN at FDA, plans to retire at the end of May.
 - The ADVANTAGE registration website is: <https://tinyurl.com/ADVANTAGEMtgSeries>

Adjournment

ICHNR 05/18/2023 Meeting Attendance

Co-Chairs

- Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist (USDA-ARS)
- RDML Paul Reed on behalf of ADM Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Co-Executive Secretaries

- Pamela Starke-Reed, USDA, ARS (Co-Exec Sec)
- Christopher Lynch, HHS, NIH (Co-Exec Sec)

HHS

- Janet de Jesus, OASH/ODPHP
- Johnalyn Lyles, OASH
- Naman Ahluwalia, CDC
- Heidi Blanck, CDC
- Ruth Petersen, CDC, DNPAO
- Jenna Seymour, CDC, DNPAO
- Meredith Fulmer, CDC, DNPAO
- Diane Harris, CDC
- Robin McKinnon, FDA
- Carolyn Chung, FDA
- Dan Raiten, NIH, NICHD
- Andrew Bremer, NIH, NICHD
- Jill Reedy, NIH, NCI
- Teniola Akingbade, NIH, ONR
- Karen Regan, NIH, ODS
- Adam Kuszak, NIH, ODS

White House

- Catherine Oakar

DoD

- Karl Friedl
- Patricia Duester, USUHS

VA

- Anne Utech

USDA

- Donna Johnson-Bailey, FNS
- Cindy Davis, ARS
- Sheila Fleischhacker, NIFA
- Joanne Guthrie, ERS
- Jay Variyam, ERS
- Jackie Haven, CNPP
- Andrea Warren, FSA

NASA

- Scott Smith

NIST

- Melissa Phillips