MINUTES
Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research (ICHNR)

Thursday, December 8, 2022
1:00 PM – 2:30 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 (HHS) and Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

RDML Reed welcomed the committee on behalf of ADM Levine. Dr. Jacobs-Young shared an announcement of USDA’s new Agricultural Science Center of Excellence for Nutrition and Diet for Better Health (ASCEND for Better Health). The new center will be focused on food and nutrition research and reducing the risk of diet-related chronic diseases, especially cancer in support of President Biden’s Cancer Moonshot 2.0 effort.

NHANES Projects of the Federal Data Consortium on Pregnancy and Birth to 24 Months:
Kellie Casavale, PhD, RD, Senior Science Advisor for Nutrition, Office of Analytics and Outreach, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, FDA, HHS

Dr. Casavale presented an overview of the Federal Data Consortium on Pregnancy and Birth to 24 Months, its history, goals, and current activities. The Consortium meets on an as needed basis to share ideas, articulate areas of need, and develop solutions for capturing new data. The Consortium is open to all Federal staff, from fellows to leadership. Three new projects (New B24 Questionnaire, New Infant Formula Label Data, and a Pilot Study of Infant Blood Draws) were implemented ca. 2019, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic progress was limited. Dr. Casavale described a current NHANES project, a new Questionnaire for Pregnancy, Lactation, and Childhood. Broadly, questions address areas of maternal pre-pregnancy health conditions, maternal depression, introduction of new foods, behavioral feeding, consumption of cultural and traditional foods, and food and water safety. Specific questions are anticipated to need further refinement. It is currently anticipated that requests for new NHANES questionnaire components will not be accommodated before 2025 and next steps include working with collaborators to refine the fundable priorities.

Q&A
• Are there certain new or additional partnerships needed to move the projects forward?
  ○ All major organizations and departments have been engaged. Once more is known on budget and what NHANES is able to accommodate the project can move forward.
• What is the reason for a focus on organic foods in one of questionnaire areas, given that there is no evidence that organic foods are healthier and that distinctions between organic and GMO classifications can create confusion?
White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health: Actions to Advance Nutrition Research: Rachel Fisher, MS, MPH, RD, Acting Executive Director, President’s Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, HHS

Ms. Fisher described the program, goals, and immediate outcomes of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, held on Sept. 28, 2022. The high-level goal of the Conference was to outline a path forward to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases. The Conference was designed around a National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health that outlines federal government actions to achieve the goals. Additionally, announced in conjunction with the Conference were 63 distinct external commitments, totalling $8 billion, with 6 commitments specific to enhancing nutrition research. The National Strategy is focused around 5 pillars: improve food access and affordability, integrate nutrition and health, empower healthy choices, support physical activity, and enhance nutrition and food security research. Several actions to enhance nutrition and food security research were outlined. Importantly, ICHNR was specifically called upon to work with the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to identify scientific opportunities, gaps, and priorities and to implement a coordinated vision to advance nutrition science, with a particular emphasis on ensuring equitable access to the benefits of research. By or around March 2023, PCAST will convene an exploratory working group on nutrition. OSTP plans to partner with DPC (and other interested/relevant EOP entities), USDA, and HHS to host a Food and Nutrition Security Research Summit in March 2023. OSTP and PCAST will summarize recommendations provided from those activities and work with ICHNR to determine how best to incorporate recommendations into an ICHNR coordinated nutrition and science research strategy.

Q&A
- The Co-Chairs encouraged ICHNR to strongly collaborate and synergize in identifying strategies and finding ways to move forward.
- OSTP noted that planning efforts for the March 2023 research summit will increase in January 2023, and that Dr. Catherine Woteki will lead the PCAST committee.

ICHNR Subcommittees Discussion: Christopher Lynch, HHS & Pamela Starke-Reed, USDA

Established ICHNR Subcommittees
- Dietary Guidance – Janet de Jesus and Eve Stoody
  - Current activities include implementation of guidelines and educational programs. The subcommittee members are also preparing for the scientific review for the next advisory committee and reviewing the guiding questions. Draft
scientific questions were posted for public comments, and those comments are currently being reviewed.

- Dietary Reference Intakes – Karl Friedl and Cindy Davis
  - Dr. Lynch reported on behalf of Drs. Friedl and Davis.
  - Current work includes establishing DRIs for macronutrients and investigations of total energy requirements using doubly labeled water databases. Systematic reviews for protein and amino acids are underway, and subcommittee members are also working to establish processes for DRIs for carbohydrates, fat, and fatty acids. There are current discussions around whether systematic reviews might be conducted by organizations other than AHRQ.
  - Dr. Starke-Reed noted that the Federal U.S. – Health Canada Steering Committees are a means for agencies and departments to express interest in and support DRI efforts.

- Nutrition Research Collaborative Roadmap
  - This is currently a vacated and inactive ICHNR subcommittee, and the question was posed as to whether it should be restored and refined to establish a roadmap for collaboration in light of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and the GAO report on nutrition research collaboration.
  - Q&A
    - It was noted that while there is a substantive impetus for ICHNR to address these needs for coordination and collaboration, there must be careful consideration as to whether a subcommittee and “collaboration roadmap” would substantively facilitate working together. There are areas where coordination and collaboration might be optimized, for example it was noted that both USDA and NIH are pursuing programs in the area of “food as medicine”.
    - One reason to catalog a roadmap could be to better capture exactly which activities each agency and department is undertaking, as the GAO process revealed some areas where full awareness of different activities was lacking.
    - The opinion was expressed that a cataloging effort should only occur if it truly facilitates and catalyzes collaboration and advances. It was suggested that if a collaboration roadmap was more of a documentary exercise, then it could have minimal value.
    - It was noted that at least some agencies were asked to complete a form on what their activities were with regard to the White House directives for hunger, nutrition, and health, and ICHNR members asked if those forms would be made available across the agencies.

- Human Nutrition Research Database – Karen Regan
  - Dr. Lynch reported on behalf of Ms. Regan.
  - Currently there is no national database of federally supported nutrition research. FedRePORTER, HHS and VA project reporters, and NSF all have relevant information, but the terminology and ontology employed can be lacking or non-harmonious. The most recent estimates for creating a federal nutrition-specific
database would require a budget of $600k-$1000k and significant initial man-hours.

- There was strong support expressed for some type of database to address this need.

**Proposed New Subcommittees**

- **Global Nutrition** – Suggested Co-chairs: Susan Vorkoper, NIH/FIC and Ahmed Kablan, USAID
  - This proposed Subcommittee was described as a possible means to optimize workstreams and track global research investments across CDC, USAID, and NIH. This would be distinct from USAID efforts in that USAID is more focused on implementation, whereas this proposed ICHNR Subcommittee focus would more on facilitating coordination of basic research efforts.

- **Nutrition Security** – Suggested Co-chairs: Anne Utech, VA and Joanne Guthrie, ERS USDA
  - Interest is growing in integrating investigations of food insecurity, food environments, nutritional health, and health disparities, and this proposed Subcommittee could capitalize on that interest to promote cross-agency collaborations and activities.
  - It was noted that ”Food and Nutritional Security” could be a more appropriate title.

- **Action Items:**
  - The Co-Chairs called for the goal, scope, charge, and possible activities of these proposed Subcommittees to be refined and brought to the agenda for further consideration at the next ICHNR meeting.

**Nutrition and Sustainability:** Chavonda Jacobs-Young, USDA and Paul Reed, HHS

USDA and HHS are jointly working on a charter for a new working group that would provide a framework/process to consider sustainability in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other policies, as well as a unified definition of sustainability. The charter still needs to go through the clearance process. ICHNR is poised to assist with this work and in identifying subject matter experts from their agencies that could contribute.

Adjournment
ICHNR 12/08/2022 Meeting Attendance

Co-Chairs
- Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Under Secretary of Research, Education, and Economics and Chief Scientist (USDA)

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

HHS
- Paul Reed, OASH/ODPHP
- Dennis Anderson-Villaluz, OASH/ODPHP
- Carter Blakey, OASH/ODPHP
- Rachel Fisher, OASH/ODPHP
- Janet de Jesus, OASH/ODPHP
- Katrina Piercy, OASH/ODPHP
- Alicia Richmond, OASH
- Joseph Rorabaugh-Irwin, OSG
- Naman Ahluwalia, CDC
- Jenna Seymour, CDC, DNPAO
- Kellie Casavale, FDA, ONFL
- Carolyn Chung, FDA
- Dana DeSilva, ORISE Fellow at HHS
- Dan Raiten, NIH, NICHD
- Jill Reedy, NIH, NCI
- Karen Regan, NIH, ODS
- Kimberly Barch, NIH, ONR
- Adam Kuszak, NIH, ODS

USDA
- Donna Johnson-Bailey, FNS
- Sheila Fleischhacker, NIFA
- Joanne Guthrie, ERS
- Jay Varyiam, ERS
- Jackie Haven, CNPP
- Eve Stoody, CNPP
- Andrea Warren, FSA

OSTP
- Dominique Carter

NSF
- Wendy Nilsen

USAID
- Ahmed Kablan

NASA
- Scott Smith

NIST
- Chuck Barber
- Melissa Phillips

DoD
- Patricia Duester, USUHS

VA
- Anne Utech