

Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Day on the Hill - April 8, 2024



What is the Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)?

- MAND is a state affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals, representing 112,000 registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) and advanced-degree nutritionists across the country.
- MAND and its ~1,600 members are committed to helping MA residents thrive through the transformative power of food and nutrition and advancing the dietetics profession through research, education and advocacy.

What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)? What is a Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist (LDN)?

- Registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), also called registered dietitians (RDs), are food and nutrition experts who have met academic and professional requirements to qualify for the 'RDN' credential.
- These include a master's degree, completion of an accredited supervised practice program, passing the national Registration Exam and ongoing continuing professional educational requirements.
- MAND was instrumental in the passage of the state law defining the rules and regulations governing dietitians and nutritionists and creating a voluntary practice license. The Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist (LDN) designation provides further credentials for qualified practitioners, protecting the public's health.

What do RDNs do and where do they work?

- The work of many RDNs includes providing Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) to prevent and treat disease, including diabetes, eating disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity.
- They work in acute care and rehab hospitals, long-term care facilities, community and public health settings, academia and research, sports nutrition, agriculture and food systems, schools, supermarkets and corporate wellness programs as well as private practice.

What are MAND's public policy priorities?

- The Greater Boston Food Bank found that the rate of food insecurity in 2022 remained as high as in 2021: 1 in 3 adults and 38% of households with children.¹ Thanks to advocacy led by Project Bread, the legislature passed universal school meals; however, full funding remains at risk due to the annual budget process.
 - **We support continued, committed funding of universal school meals for all K-12 students in MA.**
- Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death in MA. An estimated 9.0% of MA adults have diagnosed diabetes and each year an estimated 33,400 are diagnosed with the disease.^{2,3} The adult obesity rate in 2022 was 27.2%.⁴ Eating disorder treatment costs \$1.4 billion annually.⁵ Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is an essential component of comprehensive, high-quality health care for the prevention and treatment of these and other conditions.
 - **We support legislation to ensure continued access to telehealth for chronic disease management and medical nutrition therapy provided via all modalities**, allowing patients to receive services in the location and manner most convenient to them while removing barriers to care, improving health outcomes and increasing health equity.
 - **An Act relative to telehealth parity for nutrition counseling (S.618/H.1073)**
 - **An Act relative to telehealth and digital equity for patients (S.655/H.986)**

References

1. Opportunities to Improve Food Equity and Access in Massachusetts 2023. Greater Boston Food Bank. <https://www.gbfb.org/news/press-releases/2023-food-equity-access-report/>. Accessed April 1, 2024.
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