

Illinois Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Advocacy Day 2026

Duration: 90 minutes w/ Q & A (1.5 CPEU)

Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Program Description

This session provides a high-level overview of the Academy's Fiscal Year 2026 policy priorities, focusing on key federal and state legislative initiatives, regulatory efforts, and payment advocacy. Attendees will gain insight into advocacy strategies, available Academy resources, and how to effectively communicate policy priorities to stakeholders.

Performance Indicators:

- 3.2.1 Advocates for, and participates in, activities that support advancement of the profession.
- 3.2.2 Participates in professional and personal development activities for career growth and skill enhancement.
- 3.2.3 Pursues and embraces opportunities to advance practice.
- 3.2.5 Educates the employer and the public on the role and the benefits of receiving care or services from an RDN and NDTR.
- 3.2.6 Communicates with policymakers to influence decisions that impact advancement of the profession.
- 3.2.7 Contributes to the development and revision of government policies.
- 4.1.3 Aligns work with organization policies, strategic plan and mission statement.
- 4.2 Advocates for and participates in activities that support advancement of the profession.
- 4.3 Advocates for nutrition and dietetics services and resources for clients and populations.
- 12.1.3 Collaborates with community partners and stakeholders in promoting nutritional health and disease prevention.
- 13.1.4 Influences legislation, regulation, and policy changes to impact nutrition and well-being in the community.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the Academy’s Future State Vision and key priorities for Fiscal Year 2026.
- Identify major federal and state policy initiatives, including the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act, Treat and Reduce Obesity Act, and Farm Bill advocacy.
- Utilize Academy advocacy resources to educate and engage members, dietetics students, and other stakeholders.
- Participants will become familiar with Grassroots policy and will be able to identify important Illinois state legislation that directly impacts the Dietetics profession.
- Participants will know how to effectively get involved and act.
 - Participants will gain knowledge on the status of our current State Licensure Law, next steps, and proposed/current legislation and how to support advocacy.
 - Participants will learn the roles of the public policy committee

Speakers:

Rebecca Ilic and Bethany Brown serve as the State Policy Representatives for Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and have experience in policy, advocacy, and legislative affairs. They are both credentialed professionals. Their role involves educating members on policy initiatives and guiding advocacy efforts at the state level. With expertise in advocacy, our current state licensure, and policy, they are well-equipped to present the Academy’s FY26 policy priorities.

Program Outline:

Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 min)

Bethany Brown and Rebecca Ilic

- Title, disclosures, and session agenda
- Overview of the purpose and goals of Advocacy Day
- Introduction of presenters and session structure

Strategic Plan, Key Messages, and Objectives (5 min)

Bethany Brown

- Overview of the Illinois Academy strategic plan
- Core advocacy priorities for FY 2026
- Key messaging for communicating with legislators and stakeholders
- Objectives for Advocacy Day participants

Common Policy Terms (5 min)

Bethany Brown

- Introduction to common legislative and policy terminology

President's Message (5 min)

Amy Moore

- Opening remarks from the Illinois Academy President
- Importance of advocacy in advancing the nutrition and dietetics profession
- Encouragement for member engagement in policy initiatives

Policy Leaders Overview (5 min)

Elizabeth Gutierrez

- Introduction to policy leaders and advocacy leadership roles
- Overview of committees and leadership structure
- How members can connect with policy leaders and get involved
- Knowledge check/poll

State Policy Priorities (10 min)

Rebecca Ilic

- Overview of Illinois state policy initiatives including:
 - Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT)
 - Medicaid/MPA initiatives
 - Licensure Compact
 - Telehealth expansion
- Current legislative status and advocacy priorities
- Key talking points for discussions with state legislators about the bills on our fact sheet

Lobbyist and Q&A (15 min)

David Ormsby and Andrew Kretschmar

- Overview of the current legislative landscape
- Insights into state policy priorities impacting nutrition and dietetics
- Tips for engaging with policymakers and legislative staff
- Participant Q&A with lobbyists

Break (5 min)

Federal Policy Priorities (5 min)

Elizabeth Gutierrez

- Overview of federal legislative initiatives impacting the profession:
 - Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) Expansion
 - Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA)
 - Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT)
 - Older Americans Act programs

Federal Nutrition Programs and Food Policy (5 min)

Katherine Cerda

- Overview of major federal nutrition programs and policy areas:
 - WIC

- Nutrition education programs
- Food is Medicine initiatives
- Farm Bill considerations
- Implications for nutrition professionals and communities

Poll & Discussion (5 mins)

Advocacy Initiatives and Taking Action (20 min)

Bethany Brown and Rebecca Ilic

- Overview of current advocacy campaigns and initiatives from the Academy
- Nutrition Fact Check
- Resources for member advocacy
- How to get involved and take action after Advocacy Day

Closing, Next Steps and Final Q&A