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Contact: Roberta Rewers, APA, 312.786.6395; rrewers@planning.org

New Food System Principles Emphasize Health Benefits

Principles drafted by coalition of planning and health professionals advocates for healthy, sustainable food systems

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Efforts to improve the health and sustainability of the food system—from the local to global levels—was bolstered today with the release of the [Principles of a Healthy, Sustainable Food System](#).

The principles were written by a new coalition bringing together the [American Planning Association](#) (APA), the [American Dietetic Association](#) (ADA), [American Nurses Association](#) (ANA) and the [American Public Health Association](#) (APHA). For the first time, national leaders in the nursing, nutrition, planning, and public health professions worked collaboratively to create a shared platform for systems-wide food policy change.

“These principles establish a foundation for the coalition as we move forward advocating for improved food policies across all levels of the government,” said Kimberley Hodgson, MURP, MS, RD, manager of the American Planning Association’s Planning & Community Health Research Center. “Planners play an important role in removing barriers and developing plans and policies that support local food production in urban and rural areas, reduce food related pollution and waste, and improve access to healthy food.”

Endorsed by coalition members, the principles were written to support socially, economically and ecologically sustainable food systems that promote health – the current and future health of individuals, communities and the natural environment.

“The food we eat and how we grow, produce, market and distribute it have enormous implications for the public’s health,” said Georges Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E), executive director of the American Public Health Association. “A healthier, more sustainable approach to our food system would not only ensure better health outcomes, but would reduce our growing chronic disease burden, minimize the impact on the environment and workers, and more equitably distribute nutritious foods to all communities across the nation.”

The principles define a healthy, sustainable food system around the key themes of health, sustainability, resilience, fairness, economics and transparency.

“ANA believes these principles demonstrate a clear vision of what ‘health food’ should be,” added ANA President Karen A. Daley, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN. “As health professionals, nurses have a responsibility to promote the health and safety of all people. That is why ANA supports and advocates for an improved food safety regulatory system, sustainable food practices, elimination of food contaminants, better food labeling and fair labor practices; all of which these principles espouse.”

“Everyone has a fundamental right to the best quality of health care available, and this right includes access to healthy food from a sustainable food supply,” said registered dietitian and

American Dietetic Association President Judith C. Rodriguez, PhD, RD, FADA, LDN. "Through ADA's official position papers and through the daily work of our members, ADA strongly encourages environmentally responsible practices that conserve natural resources, minimize the quantity of waste and support the ecological sustainability of the food system."

Collaboration among the coalition organizations will enable greater communication and coordination between the nutrition, nursing, public health and planning professions, from the local to national levels.

The coalition plans to build upon the principles by continuing to advocate for improved food systems. Efforts are underway to coordinate with other health, nutrition and planning related organizations and to connect the food system interest groups of each organization.

About the Coalition

American Planning Association

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic, and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. For more information, visit www.planning.org.

American Dietetic Association

With approximately 71,000 members, the American Dietetic Association is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org.

American Nurses Association

The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent member nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public. For more information, visit, www.nursingworld.org/.

American Public Health Association

Founded in 1872, the APHA is the oldest, most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. The association aims to protect all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and strives to assure community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. APHA represents a broad array of health providers, educators, environmentalists, policy-makers and health officials at all levels working both within and outside governmental organizations and educational institutions. More information is available at www.apha.org.

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