



PEACH POLICY PAPERS

PPC Chair's Corner

By Robin Steagall, MSPP, RDN, LDN

May is a busy month for the Georgia Academy because it is the last month of our calendar year (June – May). There is preparation for board turnover and the realization that many of our board leaders will be turning over and new folks will step into their roles. On the PPC – we have had the gift of an incredible group of dedicated volunteers, many of whom will be continuing in their roles for another year. However, our fearless and dedicated Legislative Affairs Secretary will be transitioning to her new position as GAND President-Elect. This is a blessing for GAND and an opportunity for the next RDN who would like to support the communication efforts of our advocacy and public policy activities. If you would like to learn more and have a passion for detail and communication, please reach out to ppc@eatrightgeorgia.org.

ACTION ITEMS

Things to Know

- **Save the Date:** Advocacy Day 2024 - February 26, 2024
- Donate to the GAND Licensure Defense Fund [online](#) or Venmo/PayPal @EatrightGA - put licensure defense in the comment section
- Become a member of GAND PAC by making a PAC donation [here](#).
- Do you have an NPI #? If not, find out more [here](#) and register for free.
- The Academy **Action Alerts** are a quick & easy way to advocate for nutrition-related bills & you can take action on current alerts [here](#). Options for members & non-members to participate!

HB844 Modernizing the Dietetics Licensure Law

HB844 was drafted and introduced by the GAND's Licensure Task Force. Working closely with the Academy, we introduced legislation that reflects the future of the national dietetic licensure landscape based on the recommendations of the Model Practice Act 2023 guidelines. Here are a few of the updates:

- Updating the definition of medical nutrition therapy
- Outlining in detail what it means to be a qualified supervisor
- Differentiating between the licensed dietitian nutritionist and the licensed nutritionist through scope of practice
- Clarifying and aligning the exemptions with the practice act's mission of consumer safety.

HB844 was introduced on the last day of the General Assembly, March 23, 2023, and we will be hosting townhall sessions over the summer and into the fall to provide more details and receive your feedback. We look forward to working together to create a modern, robust licensure law that continues to protect consumers while supporting the evolving standards and scope of modern dietetics.

PPC CHAIR'S CORNER CONT.

PPC 2023-2023 Advocacy Highlights from GAND President Ashley Matthews

- For the first time since the 1990s, presenting a modernized Dietetics Practice Act as a bill (HB844)
- Continuing to harvest a very beneficial commitment to our licensure defense by having one of the best lobbyist groups in the state represent us at the Georgia State Capitol for the full fiscal year
- Worked with the Department of Community Health to provide memo level guidance on clinical privileging for dietitians
- Successfully advocating and significantly raised the Medicaid reimbursement rate for dietitians that went live in Summer 2022
- Meetings with Senators and Representatives and the Licensure Board to build necessary relationships and prepare to be one of the initial states to modernize our dietetics practice act
- Successful Advocacy Day at the Capitol and Advocacy Summit participation that ended in meetings with Senator Ossoff and Warnock's offices
- Tyler Harper, Agriculture Commissioner, speaking at ACE 2023 and hoping to collaborate with GAND in the future on state initiatives
- GAND-PAC being online with a fully operating board and making the kind of contributions that have helped bring us success in our public policy endeavors

In Health,
Robin Steagall



Advocacy Summit 2023

Left to right: Holly Porter, Cicely Thomas, Kristin Cuculovski, Commissioner Tyler Harper, Robin Steagall, Ashley Matthews



Advocacy Day 2023

GAND - POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (GAND-PAC)

Holly Porter (PAC Chair)

As we approach the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, I'd like to recognize and thank the people who make our work possible. First, I want to thank all the individuals who donated to GAND-PAC to become members of the PAC. Your donations are our sole source of funding and the work we do relies entirely on you, our GAND-PAC members. Thank you!

I want to thank our current Board of Trustees for their time, enthusiasm and effort in keeping GAND-PAC going. GAND President, Ashley Matthews, and GAND President-Elect, Cicely Thomas, have also been instrumental to our work as ex officio members of the GAND-PAC board. And I want to recognize and thank past trustees who helped rejuvenate the PAC during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.



Katherine Bechdol



Joan Fischer (Treasurer)



Corinne Jacobs-Hayes



Kristin Cuculovski (Secretary)



Holly Porter (Chair)



Robin Steagall



Sue Tocher

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the work GAND-PAC achieved over the past year. 2022 was an important election year with all of Georgia's executive officers and legislative seats up for election. With guidance from GAND's lobbyist group, Cornerstone Communications, GAND-PAC supported candidates with influence on House and Senate committees related to health, appropriations, and regulated industries. We also supported candidates for Secretary of State and for the Commissioner of Agriculture. These campaign contributions opened the door for several in-person meetings and we continue to cultivate these relationships.

As we look to the year ahead, GAND-PAC hopes to replenish our funds and build our GAND-PAC membership. We hope to expand on the candidates we support to address broader GAND policy goals. We will continue to supply advocacy resources for GAND members and licensed dietitians in Georgia. And we will continue to work behind the scenes to improve our administration in efforts to make GAND-PAC sustainable long-term. If you haven't already, we hope you will join us by [donating](#) to GAND-PAC!



Butch Parrish, Chairman of the House Special Committee on Healthcare, a speaker at GAND's Advocacy Day 2023

Board of Trustees: Holly Porter (Chair): hollybporter@me.com, Kristin Cuculovski (Secretary), Joan Fischer (Treasurer), Robin Steagall (Trustee), Katherine Bechdol (Trustee) Ashley Matthews (liaison to the GAND Board), Cicely Thomas (liaison to the GAND Board)

REIMBURSEMENT UPDATES

Telehealth Changes

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended on May 11, 2023. Fortunately, dietitians can be assured that telehealth for Medical Nutrition Therapy is here to stay. The Department of Community Health noted in their 2023 Spring Medicaid Fair that they are committed to maintaining telehealth in Georgia. The most updated manual on telehealth guidance can be found on the Georgia Medicaid Management Information System (GAMMIS).

Now that the public health emergency will be lifted, the modality of telehealth delivery flexibility will be discontinued. Registered Dietitians should ensure that their modality for telehealth is HIPPA compliant.

An example list of HIPPA compliant modalities can be found through the Department of Health and Human Services (Link: <https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/policy-changes-during-the-covid-19-public-health-emergency/hipaa-flexibility-for-telehealth-technology>).

If you have questions regarding telehealth, please contact: ppc@eatrightga.org.

Medicare Rates 2023

By law, registered dietitian nutritionists are paid 85% of the physician's rate.

Effective with claims for dates of service on or after April 1, 2013, RDNs and other Medicare Part B providers paid under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule have seen a 2% reduction in their payments as a result of sequestration.

HCPCS	State Acronym	State/Locality	Carrier	RD Non-Facility Rate	RD Facility Rate	Physician Non-Facility Rate	Physician Facility Rate
97802	GA	Atlanta, GA	1020201	\$31.37	\$27.63	\$36.91	\$32.51
97802	GA	Rest of State	1020299	\$29.51	\$26.21	\$34.72	\$30.84
97803	GA	Atlanta, GA	1020201	\$27.34	\$23.32	\$32.17	\$27.43
97803	GA	Rest of State	1020299	\$25.69	\$22.13	\$30.22	\$26.04

PPC TEAM PERSPECTIVE: THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

"I'm most proud of how diligently the PPC worked together with our lobbyist and legislatures to be fully prepared for any potential attacks against licensure." - Katherine Bechdol, Consumer Protection Coordinator

"I am proud of our pro-active efforts during this legislative session!" – Caitlin Waddle, State Policy Representative

"I am proud of all GAND members for stepping up to the yearly challenge of defending Georgia's dietetic licensure through fundraising and advocacy efforts." – Alex Webb, State Regulatory Specialist

"The fundraising efforts this year have been amazing for both the licensure defense fund and GAND-PAC! Having funds is crucial to our success." - Kristin Cuculovski, Legislative Affairs Secretary

"I feel good about being part of PPC because I feel a lot more knowledgeable and empowered about legislation that impacts our profession. I want to do what I can to get the word out to fellow RDN's so that we all can be prepared when the opportunity arises to weigh in on important conversations with our legislators." - Sue Tocher, Nutrition Services Payment Specialist



Registered Dietitian Day Proclamation with Governor Brian Kemp



Representative Lee Hawkins, a speaker at GAND's Advocacy Day 2023

GAND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PPC MEMBERS

Public Policy Chair (PPC) - Robin Steagall, MSPP, RDN, LDN

Georgia Academy President - Ashley Matthews, MS, RDN, LD, CNSC, PMP

Georgia Academy President-Elect - Cicely Thomas, M.Ed, RDN, LD

State Policy Representative (SPR) - Caitlin Waddle, MS, RDN, LD

State Regulatory Specialist (SRS) - Alex Webb, RDN, LD

Nutrition Services Payment Specialist (NSPS) - Sue Tocher, MS, RDN, LD, CDCES

Consumer Protection Coordinator (CPC) - Katherine Bechdol, MS, RDN, LD

Legislative Affairs Secretary - Kristin Cuculovski, MS, RDN, CSO, LD/N

State Legislative Monitor - open

PPC LIAISONS

GAND Political Action Committee Chair - Holly Porter

Augusta District Liaison - Sunitha Zechariah, PhD, RDN, LD, CNSC, FAND

Greater Atlanta District Liaison - Caitlin Waddle, MS, RDN, LD

West GA Area District Liaison - Melissa Brillhart, MA, RD, LD

Student Liaison - Destiney McDaniel - Georgia State University

Student Liaison - Valentina Paez - University of Georgia