



# Consumer Focus

► from the **Nutrition Coalition**

## The Nutrition Coalition calls for science in dietary guidelines

*A new coalition of some of the nation's leading academics and concerned doctors has formed to raise awareness about the need to strengthen the federal government's dietary guidelines to help Americans prevent diet-related diseases and to improve the health of citizens across the country.*

*The Nutrition Coalition, a newly established 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, formed out of a growing concern that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) have not reflected the most conclusive and current science available — and that a thorough and transparent process for developing new guidelines is needed to ensure Americans are being recommended diets based on sound science.*

### Purpose

The Coalition is composed of some of the nation's leading voices on nutrition, including three former members of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee — the government-appointed commission in charge of developing the guidelines — as well as the former chair of the American Heart Association's nutrition committee. The Coalition will educate policymakers, stakeholders and the public on the importance of improving our nutrition policy by strengthening the process by which dietary guidelines are developed.

The guidelines, which are updated every five years to reflect the latest science and research, are intended to help Americans develop healthy eating habits to preserve health and to prevent diet-related conditions like heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

The Coalition is funded by the Action Network Initiative (ANI) — an advocacy group supported by Houston-based philanthropists Laura and John Arnold — which funds initiatives to ensure public policy is based on sound science. No financial support is provided by industry groups of any kind. More information on the Nutrition Coalition can be found by visiting [www.nutrition-coalition.org](http://www.nutrition-coalition.org).

The Coalition's work is driven and supported by a Scientific Advisory Board, as well as a Medical Council, providing comprehensive and expert insight on both the science and policy of nutrition.

### The Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board consists of six leading science experts, including Ronald

Krauss, the former two-term chair of the American Heart Association's nutrition committee.

"Many of the recommendations in the dietary guidelines are not based on conclusive science," Krauss said. "In those cases, the guidelines should inform rather than recommend until there is more definitive evidence to support specific recommendations. It's therefore critical that funding for nutrition research be increased to support clinical trials that address crucial topics for which significant evidence gaps exist."

Serving alongside Krauss on the Scientific Advisory Board is Cheryl Achterberg, dean of the Ohio State University College of Education and Human Ecology, and a member of the 2010 advisory committee responsible for developing the last iteration of the dietary guidelines.

"It's been 35 years since the government launched its *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, yet the nation continues to suffer from ever-rising rates of obesity and diabetes," Achterberg said. "As a former member of the committee responsible for developing the guidelines, I believe the process has not produced the guidance we need, in part because we don't have a clear, comprehensive review of the best available science."

The Scientific Advisory Board includes former members of the advisory committee and prominent nutrition experts, including:

► Ronald Krauss, senior scientist and director of atherosclerosis research, Children's Hospital of Oakland Research Institute; adjunct professor in the Department

of Medicine at University of California (UC)—San Francisco and in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at UC—Berkeley; guest senior scientist in the Department of Genome Sciences of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory; two-term chair of the American Heart Association nutrition committee.

► Theresa Nicklas, professor of pediatrics, USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS) Children's Nutrition Research Center; Baylor College of Medicine; ACSH Board of Scientific and Policy Advisors; appointed to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (2005).

► Eric Decker, department head, University of Massachusetts Amherst Department of Food Science; awarded one of ISI Most Highly Cited Agricultural Scientists; appointed to Food and Drug Administration Food Advisory Committee.

► Cheryl Achterberg, dean, the Ohio State University College of Education and Human Ecology; inaugural dean of the College of Human Sciences; appointed to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (2010); liaison to the governing board of the Nutrition Coalition.

► Joanne Lupton, distinguished professor, Texas A&M Department of Nutrition and Food Science; member of the Institute of Medicine; chair of the Macronutrients Panel for the Dietary Reference Intakes and the National Academy panel on dietary fiber; current member of the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine; lifetime associate of the National Academy of Sciences; appointed a member of the Dietary Guidelines Committee (2010).

► Esther Myers, former chief science officer of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; developer of the Evidence Analysis Library for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; director of nutritional medicine for the U.S. Air Force.

### The Medical Council

The Coalition's Medical Council will further bolster the work of the Scientific Advisory Board, and the Coalition at large, by raising awareness about the need for more flexible approaches, beyond the low-fat diet,

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for combatting obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

“Physicians are on the front lines of helping people to lose weight and prevent diabetes and heart disease,” said Sarah Hallberg of Indiana University’s School of Medicine and chair of the Coalition’s Medical Council. “It’s clear to us, as health practitioners and with our current nutritional advice, that we’ve been unable to help our patients effectively combat these diseases. It is therefore critical that the guidance we rely upon, from official dietary recommendations, be truly based on the best and most rigorous and current science available.”

The Medical Council consists of a number of prominent doctors, including:

► Sarah Hallberg, doctor of osteopathic medicine; medical director and founder, Indiana University-Arnett Health Medical Weight Loss Program; diplomate, American Board of Obesity Medicine and American Board of Clinical Lipidology; ACSM registered clinical exercise physiologist; adjunct professor Indiana University School of Medicine.

► Thomas Dayspring, doctor of medicine;

director of Cardiovascular Education at Foundation for Health Improvement and Technology; clinical assistant professor of medicine at New Jersey Medical School; awarded the National Lipid Association’s prestigious 2001 President’s Service Award.

► Michael Ozner, doctor of medicine; director of Wellness & Prevention at Baptist Health South Florida; symposium director, Cardiovascular Disease Prevention; awarded 2008 American Heart Association Humanitarian Award; elected to Top Cardiologists in America; best-selling author.

► Mark Cucuzzella, doctor of medicine; professor, Department of Family Medicine and director of predoctoral Family Medicine Education Program of West Virginia University; Lt. Col., U.S. Air Force Reserves.

► Carrie Diulus, doctor of medicine; former medical director of Information Technology Division at the Cleveland Clinic; CEO and founder of Speira Health; senior clinical associate for Tres Rios Group and Amati Health; active member of the North American Spine Surgeon Association.

The Nutrition Coalition will further be supported by a governing board consisting of

Cheryl Achterberg; John Billings, the director of New York University; and Nina Teicholz, journalist and author; with coordinating support from Beth Johnson, food policy consultant.

### **The need for a rigorous process based on conclusive science**

More than two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese, and more than half are either prediabetic or diabetic. These nutrition-related epidemics cost the government more than \$4 trillion annually in healthcare expenditures. It is problematic that national nutrition advice, known as the *Dietary Guidelines of America*, have yet to combat these nutrition-related diseases. Concern about this issue is growing, not only about the science behind the guidelines, but the process overall.

For more information on the Nutrition Coalition, please visit [www.nutrition-coalition.org](http://www.nutrition-coalition.org).



**Editor’s Note:** *This is a release from the Nutrition Coalition.*