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How is Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition working to advance the Food as Medicine movement?

We contribute to the evolving conversation on Food as Medicine (FAM) through our writing (reports, manuscripts, infographics, and other), national and international partnerships, and active participation at local, regional, and national summits. We currently serve as the project lead for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded, Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center

(NTAE). In this role, we serve as the coordinating center for reporting, evaluation, and technical assistance for GusNIP grantees, on two main topic areas: produce prescriptions and nutrition incentives. The NTAE created the Nutrition Incentive Hub (www.nutritionincentivehub.org), which is a coalition of partners that work to support GusNIP grantees, practitioners, and others working in this area. Our year 3 impact findings showed that these programs increase fruit and vegetable intake and promote food and nutrition security among populations who are low-income (for full report:

<https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/2uwlf3ch/gusnip-y3-impact-findings-report.pdf>).

We are also serving as the evaluation partner on Elevance/Feeding America's FAM3 initiative, where we support 21 grantees across the country implementing FAM programs. We are studying factors associated with successful implementation and we are seeking to describe the impacts of these programs on dietary and health related outcomes.

What is the most notable advancement or innovation to come out in the last year?

ChatGPT is a gamechanger. Through its ability to process and analyze a multitude of data very rapidly, ChatGPT can provide personalized health information to people on a 24/7 basis. On the flip side, it can track online platforms for any potential threats, such as outbreaks (e.g., food contamination, infectious diseases, etc.). And that is just the tip of the iceberg. Although there are legitimate concerns about privacy, and potential misinterpretation of information, there is no putting the toothpaste back in the tube at this point and we need to figure out how to best harness this amazing technology.

How has the food as medicine policy space evolved over the last year?

There has been a groundswell of interest in Food as Medicine over the last year,

which has been further bolstered by national activities and engagement among multiple stakeholders, including policymakers. For instance, the White House Conference last September and subsequent, National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health elevated the importance of both nutrition security and Food as Medicine as an important topic areas:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/White-House-National-Strategy-on-Hunger-Nutrition-and-Health-FINAL.pdf>.

In addition, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is now interested in food as medicine. See NIH Centers of Excellence for Food is Medicine funding concept released: (<https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/Day-1-155PM-ONR-Concept-Food-is-Medicine-Lynch-background-508.pdf>).

Lastly, the Farm Bill is right around the corner, with GusNIP being promoting as a program that works to increase access and availability for fruits and vegetables among low-income populations, and importantly, GusNIP has garnered bipartisan support.



I recently co-authored a Society of Behavioral Medicine policy position statement entitled, “Prioritize “Food is Medicine” Initiatives in the 2023 Farm Bill for Human and Planetary Health,” which can be viewed: <https://www.sbm.org/UserFiles/FoodisMedicine.pdf>

What are you looking forward to at the Food as Medicine: Policy Summit?

I am excited to attend the Summit and hear informative and inspiring talks, as well as present on the Year 3 GusNIP impact findings for produce prescription programs. I am also looking forward to continuing important dialogue around the topic of Food as Medicine, with others from my own field, as well as across other sectors to discuss what is working and what is not, how to continue to build on the momentum, and where we can make strides, particularly in research and evaluation. The summit will be a great

opportunity to get folks from different disciplines in a room together to discuss how we can foster and/or leverage public private partnerships with the ultimate goal of improving nutrition security and health among low-income populations, both from a prevention and treatment standpoint. The two previous meetings I attended were terrific networking events, so I am excited to continue conversations with those I already know doing great work in this area, as well meet new colleagues.

To hear more from Amy, join us at the Food as Medicine: Policy Summit this November (29-30th) in Washington, DC. She will be delivering a Co-Presentation titled The Gus Shumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), Spotlight on Produce Prescription Programs. Register here: <https://www.foodmedicinepolycysummit.com/register/>