KENTUCKY ACADEMY
of Nutrition and Dietetics

# President's Message

Hello KAND Members!

My name is Abby Pace, and I will be serving as your President for the 2025-2026 Board of Directors. I wanted to tell you a little about myself then talk about some opportunities to get involved.

I earned my BS in Hospitality Management and Dietetics from Western Kentucky University before completing my internship at University of Kentucky Hospital and Lexington Veteran Affairs Hospitals. I, officially, became a dietitian in July 2017 (time flies!!!). After my internship I attended Auburn University for my Masters and Doctorate in Nutrition. While at Auburn, I worked as the Nutrition Services Coordinator for Health Promotion and Wellness Services. In this role, I was able to work with college students with disordered eating and eating disorders as a part of an outpatient interdisciplinary team. Through my graduate work and role at HPWS, I found my passion for research concerning college student food insecurity that I continue to this day. Once returning to Kentucky, I held a teaching role at Georgetown College before transitioning to Eastern Kentucky University. At EKU, I was able to find my next passion: working with aspiring dietitians. I will continue this role at University of Kentucky Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition starting this summer. I became active within KAND in 2023 while serving as on the ANCE committee followed by 2024 ANCE Chair and President-Elect in 2024-2025. My 1-year-old son, Jonathan, and I live in Lexington with our dog, CJ. We spend a lot of time

outside going for walks, swimming, and playing with anything that catches his eye (grass, dogs, flowers, rocks, dirt, etc).

We have a lot of exciting things on deck for this year! It is a great time to get involved. ANCE and Membership committees are always looking for member support. We are also planning to re-evaluate KAND's strategic plan and offer webinars to members. If you are interested in supporting KAND's efforts in one of these capacities, please feel free to reach out to me at Abbigail.pace@uky.edu or to Moira, KAND's Executive Director, at kentuckyand@gmail.com.

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# Public Policy Panel Update

The Public Policy Panel looks forward to another jam-packed year of working with you to advance our profession through policy and advocacy!

While we were disappointed the Licensure Compact legislation stalled in the Senate, we have been assured it was only due to lack of time with the Short Session. We are already in communication with potential sponsors for our bill for the 2026 Session. The momentum in support of Licensure Compact nationwide is building - 13 and counting! You can stay up-to-date with the latest news and next steps here: https://dietitianscompact.org/?page_id=11

Currently, four action alerts are open to protect access to nutrition care and federal nutrition programs like Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, school meals, and SNAP-Ed. These programs are critical for supporting Kentuckians, with approximately 30% enrolled in Medicaid and approximately 13% receiving SNAP benefits.

We encourage you to complete action alerts often - yes it is okay to do them more than once - and share them with your networks. Action alerts are open to the public.

Action Alerts

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# BlueGrass Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Updates

Thanks to all the BlueGrass Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics members and area nutrition professionals that provided  feedback regarding how BGAND can better serve you.  The results of the survey overwhelmingly supported the continuation of our professional group.  BGAND will remain active for the upcoming year!  We will be we in a year of transition, evaluating member values and needs and how we can efficiently meet them. Our aim is to be transparent with you so you know what to expect over the coming year.

The results overwhelmingly supported continuing BGAND, with some key suggestions for improvement such as membership fees for BGAND, meeting formats, community networking, communication via emails, website, Facebook page, etc.  So with those things in mind:

- **Eliminate BGAND annual membership dues,** moving to an event-based fee model for in-person networking events.
- **Shift from monthly virtual CEU meetings** to contributing 1–2 CEUs through KAND's upcoming webinar series for 2025–2026.
- **Host 1–2 in-person networking events** annually that will include CEUs.
- **Use KAND's website, email list, and virtual meeting platform** to streamline communication and reduce tech-related barriers.

We sincerely appreciate your input and patience as we partner with KAND to roll out these changes. Stay tuned—more details on membership and upcoming events will be shared in the coming weeks!

**Kentucky Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**

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