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ASN Releases Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations for Maintaining Trust in Nutrition Science

*The full report and accompanying commentary from ASN's President are publishing this week in **The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition**.*

Rockville, MD – January 18, 2019 – Two years after announcing the commission of an independent “Blue Ribbon Panel” to review and make recommendations on the current state of trust in nutrition science, the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) announces the publication of the panel’s report, “Best Practices in Nutrition Science to Earn and Keep the Public’s Trust,” which presents the panel’s 6 recommendations regarding how to work collaboratively with various stakeholders while maintaining transparency and scientific rigor in nutrition science.

The Blue Ribbon Panel was created in response to a growing perception among researchers that public trust in nutrition science is eroding as nutrition information is increasingly being received from an expanding variety of sources, not all of which are clear about their motivations, qualifications, or ethical standards. Without clear and transparent earmarks by which to measure reliability of the information being received, the public is left to question where the “expert” information they receive is originating and whether it is trustworthy.

The panel, an independent group composed of 11 members from a variety of disciplines, was charged with identifying best practices to allow effective collaborations while ensuring that ASN’s activities are transparent, advance research, and maintain scientific rigor, engendering trust among all nutrition science stakeholders. Many of the members are not ASN members and do not work directly within the field of nutrition research. The Chair of the panel, **Cutberto Garza**, a gastroenterologist, recipient of the Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Prize for Education and Research and former vice-provost at Cornell University, Provost and Dean of Faculties at Boston College, and Director of the United Nations University Food and Nutrition Programme, was joined by **Vinita Bali**, former chair of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition Board; **Catherine Bertini**, winner of the World Food Prize in 2003 and a leader in agricultural development and humanitarian action; **Eric Campbell**, professor of medicine at the University of Colorado Center for Bioethics and Humanities and an expert in conflicts of interest in medicine and research; **Edward Cooney**, former Executive Director of the Congressional Hunger Center and recipient of the Gene White Lifetime Achievement Award for Child Nutrition; **J. Michael McGinnis**, an epidemiologist and Executive Officer of the National Academy of Medicine; **Sylvia Rowe**, President of SR Strategy, which provides consulting on health, nutrition, food safety, and risk issues; **Robert Steinbrook**, a clinician in internal medicine affiliated with the Yale School of Medicine, Editor At Large for JAMA Internal Medicine, and medical writer for JAMA, NEJM, and the Los Angeles Times with an expertise in conflicts of interest in medicine and health; and **Catherine Woteki**, the previous

under-secretary for the USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area; along with further guidance from **Patrick Stover** (ex officio), Dean and Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M AgriLife and a Past President of ASN, and **John Courtney** (ex officio), Chief Executive Officer of ASN. To ensure complete objectivity, the ASN Board of Directors had no influence or input on the discussions or recommendations of the panel.

After an extensive review of peer-reviewed literature concerning various aspects of trust in nutrition science, the panel crafted the following 6 recommendations:

1. Manage conflicts of interest (COIs) in partnerships and activities
2. Uphold the standards for evidence-based conclusions in publications
3. Maintain effective dialogue between ASN, the public, and the media
4. Develop guidelines for conducting nutrition research funded by entities with COIs
5. Perform independent audits of adherence
6. Disclose all COIs of financial and other sources

Feedback from ASN members and nonmembers in the nutrition science community and elsewhere will be accepted from now until February 15, allowing the public an opportunity to be part of the dialogue and help shape the future for ASN, as well as the field of nutrition science. Following the feedback period, the ASN Board of Directors will determine a plan of action regarding how to implement the recommendations, as appropriate.

This initiative continues ASN's commitment to ensuring transparency and objectivity in our practices as a Society; ASN follows established guiding principles for working with external groups, and has previously worked to develop principles for entering into research partnerships. It is the goal of everyone involved to create best practices that will benefit not only ASN, but all entities in the nutrition science space.

The full report, "[Best Practices in Nutrition Science to Earn and Keep the Public's Trust](#)", is available now online on [The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition's Advance Access](#) page, along with the accompanying commentary by ASN's President, Catherine J. Field, "[Ensuring Trust in Nutrition Science: Request for Stakeholder Input](#)." ASN is accepting [feedback until February 15, 2019](#).

About the American Society for Nutrition

ASN is the authoritative voice on nutrition and publisher of [The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition](#), [The Journal of Nutrition](#), [Advances in Nutrition](#) and [Current Developments in Nutrition](#). Established in 1928, ASN's 6,500 members in 100 countries work in academia, practice, government and industry. ASN advances excellence in nutrition research and practice through its publications, education, public affairs and membership programs, reaching over 36 million individuals annually. Visit us at www.nutrition.org.

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