



Dear SNE Members –

The 2008 election is an opportunity for us to use our voices to raise the volume on issues related to food and health during the campaign and use our votes to direct the future of our nation's health. While much of the debate about health has been on health care, little is said about the role of prevention in keeping health care costs down. Related to that are the complex issues of obesity, nutrition education, food security and food systems – all of which SNE cares about.

The SNE Advisory Committee on Public Policy has compiled a document that profiles the positions of two presidential candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, including their views on issues related to agriculture and food systems, food security, food assistance programs, nutrition education, obesity as well as health care reform. The information was collected primarily from the respective campaigns and their websites. (Note that candidates did not respond to all topics presented to them by SNE/ACPP.)

The document includes links to the candidates' websites as well as a link to a website of the American Medical Association (AMA) which allows you to compare congressional as well as presidential candidates' positions on health-related topics. We ask that you look over this information and then act upon it. Specifically, we suggest you try at least one of the following:

- 1) Email the candidates and ask them about their stance on food and health issues such as childhood obesity or the rising cost of food, not just health care.
- 2) Attend town halls or other functions either candidate or their representatives may be having in your area. Ask about a specific food and nutrition issue that you feel needs to be addressed by the next administration.
- 3) Write Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor calling for the candidates to specifically address food and nutrition issues. Provide some background and rationale on issues for which you have knowledge and expertise.
- 4) Submit questions to television and radio networks, organizations, and other media outlets covering upcoming debates or candidate speaking engagements.
- 5) When either campaign calls your home or knocks on your door or sends you a mailer---Ask or write back regarding the candidate's initiatives or positions on food and nutrition issues.
- 6) Share the document with others, such as colleagues or students, to help inform them on the candidates' positions.
- 7) Find out the positions of candidates running for Congress from your state. Consider one of the above actions for state-level elections. The AMA website has information on Congressional races as well.

If we want nutrition education and other preventive approaches to be a part of the next President's agenda, we have to increase awareness on these issues and give guidance on how best to go about addressing these challenging and complicated concerns.

If you would like further advice on how to go about any of these options, please contact an ACPP member you may know, or Linda Drake, ACPP Chair – Linda.drake@uconn.edu

ACPP members are listed on the SNE Website (www.sne.org) – click on SNE Public Policy from the left side of the home page.

Thanks for your time and effort in making food and nutrition important issues in this campaign.

SNE Advisory Committee on Public Policy

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SNE Advisory Committee on Public Policy – Presidential Candidates Positions

Disclaimer – SNE does not endorse any candidate. Candidates did not respond to all topics presented by SNE.

SNE Recommendation (abbreviated)	John McCain http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/	Barack Obama http://www.barackobama.com/issues
Agriculture and Food Systems		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support policies that allow for diverse crop production and viability for all agricultural sectors • Support and strengthen policies for sustainable agriculture including programs such as farmland preservation and those that protect the environment • Support the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Nutrition Program • Revise all Food Aid programs to emphasize developing local food systems • Support increased purchase of fruits and vegetables for USDA’s domestic nutrition programs • Support COOL and Organic Standard regulations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more security to family farmers through farm payment reforms. • Establish programs to train the next generation of farmers and provide tax incentives for new farmers. • Strengthen anti-monopoly laws and producer protections to ensure independent farmers have fair access to markets, control over their production decisions, and transparency in prices. • Support immediate implementation of the Country of Origin Labeling law. • Help organic farmers afford to certify their crops and reform crop insurance to not penalize organic farmers. • Promote regional food systems. Provide capital for value-added enterprises, like cooperative marketing initiatives and farmer-owned processing plants. Establish a small business initiative for rural America. • Increase incentives for farmers and private landowners for sustainable agriculture and protect wetlands, grasslands, and forests.

Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs/Food Security

- Give states incentives for increasing participation rates of food assistance programs.
- Expand Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) technology to more venues - farmers' markets, farm stands, community supported farms and provide incentives for food stamp recipients to purchase more fruits and vegetables
- Increase funding for food security research including Community Food Projects
- Fund incentives for schools and agencies to purchase regionally produced foods
- Assure that foods in the Commodity Food Programs align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Food Labeling/Food Safety

- Support resources for the FDA to improve information provided to consumers on labels of food products and dietary supplements, including nutritional claims
- Support regulations to provide more information on calories and key nutrients on restaurant menus
- Support food safety education for consumers

Food Marketing to Children

- Encourage the federal government, states and school districts to implement policies to eliminate the marketing and advertising of foods in public venues
- Support funding for media-based campaigns to promote healthful eating and physical activity to children
- Restore the FTC's authority to regulate marketing and advertising to children
- Support state and federal funding for the inclusion of media literacy education

Healthcare Reform

- Control health care costs and enhance quality with reforms to federal policy and programs.
- Promote competition throughout the health care system.
- Give patients a larger role in prevention and care, putting more decisions and responsibility in their hands.
- Make public more information on treatment options and require transparency by providers regarding medical outcomes, quality of care, costs, and prices.
- Give states the flexibility to, and encourage them to experiment with: alternative forms of access; risk-adjusted payments per episode covered under

- Reimburse employer health plans for a portion of the catastrophic costs they incur above a threshold if they guarantee such savings are used to reduce the cost of workers' premiums.
- Require providers that participate in the new public plan, Medicare or the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) utilize proven disease management programs.
- Support programs to coordinate and integrate care of those with chronic conditions.
- Require hospitals and providers to collect and publicly report measures of health care costs and quality. Health plans will also be

	<p>Medicaid; use of private insurance in Medicaid; alternative insurance policies and insurance providers; and different licensing schemes for medical providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build genuine national markets by permitting providers to practice nationwide.• Support innovative delivery systems, such as clinics in retail outlets, that provide greater market flexibility in permitting appropriate roles for nurse practitioners, nurses, and doctors.• Where cost-effective, employ telemedicine, and community and mental health clinics in areas where services and providers are limited.	<p>required to disclose the percentage of premiums that go to patient care as opposed to administrative costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reward providers who see patients enrolled in the new public plan for achieving performance thresholds based on outcome measures, instead of the volume of services provided.• Tackle the root causes of health disparities by addressing differences in access to health coverage and promoting prevention and public health. Challenge the medical system to eliminate inequities in health care through quality measurement and reporting, implementation of effective interventions such as patient navigation programs, and diversification of the health workforce.• Strengthen antitrust laws to prevent insurers from overcharging physicians for malpractice insurance and promote new models for addressing errors that improve patient safety, strengthen the doctor-patient relationship and reduce the need for malpractice suits.• Invest \$10 billion a year over five years to move the U.S. health care system to adoption of standards-based electronic health information systems, including electronic health records, and phase in requirements for full implementation of health IT. Ensure patient privacy is protected.
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been over 400 health care mergers in the last 10 years and just two companies dominate a full third of the national market. Prevent companies from abusing their monopoly power through unjustified price increases. Force insurers to pay out a reasonable share of their premiums for patient care instead of keeping exorbitant amounts for profits and administration.• Allow Americans to buy medicines from other developed countries if the drugs are safe and prices are lower outside the U.S. Repeal the ban that prevents the government from negotiating with drug companies, which could result in savings as high as \$30 billion. Increase the use of generic drugs in Medicare, Medicaid, and FEHBP and prohibit big name drug companies from keeping generics out of markets.• Attract providers to rural America by creating a loan forgiveness program for doctors and nurses who work in underserved rural areas. Increase rural access to care by promoting health information technologies like telemedicine. |
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Health Insurance

- Support the inclusion of disease prevention and health promotion activities paid through health care plans.
- Reform the tax code to eliminate the bias toward employer-sponsored health insurance, and provide all individuals with a \$2,500 tax credit (\$5,000 for families) to increase incentives for insurance coverage. Individuals owning innovative multi-year policies that cost less than the full credit can deposit remainder in expanded health savings accounts.
- Families should be able to purchase health insurance nationwide, across state lines, to maximize their choices, and heighten competition for their business that will eliminate excess overhead, administrative, and excessive compensation costs from the system.
- Make insurance innovative, moving from job to home, job to job, and providing multi-year coverage.
- Require any state receiving Medicaid to develop a financial "risk adjustment" bonus to high-cost and low-income families to supplement tax credits and Medicaid funds.
- Allow individuals to get insurance through any organization or association that they choose: employers, individual purchases, churches, professional association, etc. These policies will be available to small businesses and the self-employed, will be portable across all jobs, and will automatically bridge the time between retirement and Medicare eligibility. These plans would have to meet rigorous standards and certification.
- Make available a new national health plan to all Americans, including the self-employed and small businesses, to buy affordable health coverage that is similar to the plan available to members of Congress. The plan will have guaranteed eligibility, streamlined paperwork and affordable premiums, co-pays and deductibles.
- The national plan benefit package will be similar to that offered through Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), the plan members of Congress have. The plan will cover all essential medical services, including preventive, maternity and mental health care.
- Individuals and families who do not qualify for Medicaid or SCHIP but still need financial assistance will receive an income-related federal subsidy to buy into the new public plan or purchase a private health care plan.
- The new public plan will be simple to enroll in and provide ready access to coverage. Participants in the new public plan and the National Health Insurance Exchange will be able to move from job to job without changing or jeopardizing their health care coverage.
- Participating insurance companies in the new public program will be required to report data to ensure that standards for quality, health information technology and

		<p>administration are being met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a National Health Insurance Exchange to help individuals who wish to purchase a private insurance plan. The Exchange will create rules and standards for participating insurance plans to ensure fairness and to make individual coverage more affordable and accessible. All the plans offered will be required to be at least as generous as the new public plan and have the same standards for quality and efficiency. The Exchange would evaluate plans and make the differences among the plans, including cost of services, public.• Require employers that do not contribute to the cost of quality health coverage for their employees to contribute a percentage of payroll toward the costs of the national plan. Small employers that meet certain revenue thresholds will be exempt.• Require that all children have health care coverage. Expand the options for young adults to get coverage including allowing young people up to age 25 to continue coverage through their parents' plans.• Expand eligibility for the Medicaid and SCHIP programs and ensure that these programs continue to serve their critical safety net function.• Build on the efforts of states that have taken the lead in health care reform and do not replace what they are doing. States can continue to experiment, provided they meet the minimum standards of the national plan.
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Nutrition Education and Research

- Support and fund coordinated school-based nutrition education efforts at the state level
- Invest new federal funding for food, nutrition, agricultural and environmental research and extension
- Increase support for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program for low-income families and youth
- Expand and strengthen the nutrition education components of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs for WIC and Seniors
- Support Nutrition Education for SNAP (formerly Food Stamp Program)
- Support requirements for nutrition education and physical activity in schools.
- Support teaching the use of restaurant nutrition information.

Obesity

- Support obesity prevention approaches that address the food environment as well as individual education.

- Childhood obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure are all on the rise. We must again teach our children about health, nutrition and exercise - vital life information.

- Committed to holistic approach toward childhood obesity that includes the possibility of greater federal funding for physical education, new programs to encourage health insurance companies to pay for preventative health care, more education about food choices and better school menus.

Public Health/Prevention Programming

- Support public health prevention programs at the national, state and local levels to address lifestyle factors contributing to chronic disease.
- Public health initiatives must be undertaken with all our citizens to stem the growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes, and to deter smoking.
- Support investments in biomedical research, as well as medical education and training in health-related fields. Improve the efficiency of that research by improving coordination both within government and across government/private/non-profit partnerships. Ensure that we translate scientific progress into improved approaches to disease prevention, early detection and therapy that is available for all Americans.
- Work across party lines to promote greater investment in the global AIDS battle.
- Strengthen and better enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Ensure that disabled Americans receive Medicaid and Medicare benefits in a low-cost, effective and timely manner.
- Support equal coverage for mental illnesses.
- Protect children from lead poisoning by requiring that child care facilities be lead-safe within five years.
- Implement a plan to reduce the amount of mercury that is deposited in oceans, lakes, and rivers, which in turn would reduce the amount of mercury in fish and reduce the number of newborns at risk for high levels of toxic mercury.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support federal funding for autism research on the root causes and treatments, and increase funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to truly ensure that no child is left behind.
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Websites for Vice Presidential Candidates

Governor Sarah Palin

<http://gov.state.ak.us/>

Senator Joe Biden

<http://biden.senate.gov/issues>

The American Medical Association has a website where you can compare views on health care from Congressional as well as Presidential candidates: <http://yourcandidatesyourhealth.org/>

Information for this document was from the candidate's websites, from their campaign spokespeople and from:

"Looking Towards the Future: 2009 Health Care Debate," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, March 2008, Vol. 108: No 3; p.432-434

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