

S.1536, the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2021

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the availability of medical nutrition therapy services under the Medicare program

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) & Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)

Background

- Celiac disease is a serious, genetic autoimmune disorder in which ingesting gluten causes damage to the villi of the small intestine. The only treatment is the total elimination of gluten-containing products, including wheat, barley, and rye sources.
- Adapting to a strict, gluten-free diet is a complex process, where lack of compliance significantly affects mortality, including a 6x greater risk from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and a 4x greater risk from small bowel cancer.
- Newly diagnosed celiac disease patients, and those who continue to be symptomatic, require nutritional diagnostic, therapy and counseling services furnished by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional as referred by a physician.
- Despite the potential benefits, Medicare only covers outpatient Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) for patients with diabetes or kidney disease, leaving many seniors without access to care.

Medical Nutrition Therapy Act (S.1536)

- The Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2020 would give Medicare beneficiaries access to the care they need by providing coverage in Medicare Part B for MNT for people with celiac disease, prediabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, malnutrition, eating disorders, cancer, HIV/AIDS and unintentional weight loss. This bill would also authorize nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists and psychologists to refer their patients for MNT.
- MNT has been shown to be a cost-effective component of treatment for celiac disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, HIV infection, unintended weight loss in older adults, and other chronic conditions.^{1,2,3,4} Counseling provided by a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) as part of a health care team can positively impact dietary adherence, weight, blood pressure, blood lipids, and blood sugar control.^{5,6}

Companion Legislation

- H.R.3108, the Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2021, introduced by Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI).

Support Organizations

Celiac Disease Foundation, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Association on Health and Disability, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American College of Lifestyle Medicine, American Diabetes Association, American Gastroenterological Association, American Heart Association, American Institute for Cancer Research, American Nurses Association, American Optometric Association, American Podiatric Medical Association, American Psychological Association, American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, American Society for Nutrition, American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, American Society for Preventive Cardiology, Association of State Public Health Nutritionists, Balanced, Coalition for Kidney Health, Common Threads, Defeat Malnutrition Today, Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action, Endocrine Society, Food is Medicine Coalition, Global Liver Institute, Healthcare Leadership Council, Healthcare Nutrition Council, HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute, MedTech Coalition for Metabolic Health, National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, National Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists, National Lipid Association, National WIC Association, Obesity Action Coalition, Obesity Medicine Association, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association, Providence Saint Joseph Health, Public Health Institute, Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness, Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior, The National Kidney Foundation, The Obesity Society

How to Cosponsor?

- Contact Maria Olson in Sen. Collins' office Maria_Olson@aging.senate.gov, or Devin Parsons in Sen. Peters' office Devin_Parsons@peters.senate.gov.

1 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. MNT: Cost Effectiveness, Cost-Benefit, or Economic Savings of MNT. 2009. <https://www.andeal.org/topic.cfm?cat=4085>. Accessed May 3, 2021.

2 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. MNT: Disorders of Lipid Metabolism. 2015. <https://www.andeal.org/topic.cfm?menu=5284&cat=5231>. Accessed May 3, 2021.

3 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. MNT: Weight Management. 2015. <https://www.andeal.org/topic.cfm?menu=5284&cat=5230>. Accessed May 3, 2021.

4 Sikand G, Cole RE, Handu D, deWaal D, Christaldi J, Johnson EQ, Arpino LM, Ekvall SM. Clinical and cost benefits of medical nutrition therapy by registered dietitian nutritionists for management of dyslipidemia: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Clin Lipidol.* 2018;12(5):1113-1122.

5 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. MNT: Comparative Effectiveness of MNT Services. 2009. <https://www.andeal.org/topic.cfm?menu=4085&cat=3676>. Accessed May 3, 2021.

6 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. MNT: RDN in Medical Team. 2015. <https://www.andeal.org/topic.cfm?menu=5284&cat=5233>. Accessed May 3, 2021.