



May 21, 2025

Re: Outside Witness Testimony from John E. Courtney, Ph.D., on behalf of the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) prepared for the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies regarding National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ National Center for Health Statistics (CDC/ NCHS) Fiscal Year 2026 funding.

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations. **The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) respectfully requests at least \$51.303 billion dollars for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and \$220 million dollars for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ National Center for Health Statistics (CDC/ NCHS) in FY 2026.** ASN is dedicated to bringing together the world's top researchers to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition, and has nearly 8,000 members working throughout academia, clinical practice, government, and industry.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

The NIH is the nation's premier sponsor of biomedical research and is the agency responsible for conducting and supporting the largest percentage of federally funded basic and clinical nutrition research. Although nutrition and obesity research make up only about 5% of the NIH budget, some of the most promising nutrition-related research discoveries have been made possible by NIH support. NIH nutrition-related discoveries have impacted the way clinicians prevent and treat heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases. Nevertheless, healthcare costs and risk factors for diet-related diseases remain high. In fact, from 2019 to 2020, age-adjusted death rates rose 4.1% for heart disease, 4.9% for stroke, 8.7% for Alzheimer disease, and 14.8% for diabetes¹. With additional NIH support, breakthroughs and discoveries to improve the health of all Americans and reduce the economic burden of diet-related diseases will be possible.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db427.htm>

Investment in biomedical research generates new knowledge, improves health, and leads to innovation and long-term economic growth. **ASN recommends at least \$51.303 billion dollars for the NIH base budget in FY 2026** to support NIH nutrition-related research that will lead to important disease prevention and cures. This represents a \$4.222 billion or 9.0% increase over the comparable FY 2025 funding level. In a time where other global competitors continue to increase investments in medical research and scientific talent, it is crucial that the U.S. maintains its leadership to deliver breakthroughs in medical advances and cures and economic growth for our country.

A budget of \$51.303 billion will allow NIH to provide adequate support for the NIH Common Fund's Nutrition for Precision Health, powered by the All of Us Research Program, while still providing much needed increases to other parts of the portfolio. ASN strongly supports maintenance of the NIH Office of Nutrition Research at the FY 2025 enacted budget of \$1.3 million. Supporting ONR improves the health of the nation, making the country stronger and more competitive, and reduces the heavy human and economic burden of chronic disease for all Americans. By centrally coordinating implementation of the Strategic Plan for NIH Nutrition Research, ONR supports cross-cutting NIH nutrition research developed in collaboration with Institutes and Centers that already fund nutrition research. Nutrition research will provide solutions ensuring nutrition security and access to healthy food to prevent a variety of diet-related diseases and conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and cancer.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics (CDC NCHS)

The National Center for Health Statistics, housed within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is the nation's principal health statistics agency. **ASN recommends a Fiscal Year 2026 funding level of \$220 million dollars for NCHS** to help ensure uninterrupted collection of vital health and nutrition statistics and help cover the costs needed for technology and information security maintenance and upgrades that are necessary to replace aging survey infrastructure. NCHS provides enormous value to researchers and policymakers by providing them with accurate and timely health data.

The NCHS provides critical data on all aspects of our health care system, and it is responsible for monitoring the nation's health and nutrition status through surveys such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), that serve as a gold standard for data collection around the world. Nutrition and health data, largely collected through NHANES, are essential for tracking the nutrition, health and well-being of the American population, and are especially important for observing nutritional and health trends in our nation's children. This is an invaluable source of data that has been and can continue to be used to address major health issues as they arise.

Nutrition monitoring conducted by HHS in partnership with the USDA/ Agricultural Research Service is a unique and critically important surveillance function in which dietary intake, nutritional status, and health status are evaluated in a rigorous and standardized manner. Nutrition monitoring is essential to track what Americans are eating, inform nutrition and dietary guidance policy, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of nutrition assistance programs, and

study nutrition-related disease outcomes. Nutrition monitoring is an inherently governmental function, and findings are essential for multiple government agencies, as well as the public and private sector. Funds are needed to ensure the continuation of this critical surveillance of the nation's nutritional status and the many benefits it provides.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit FY 2026 appropriations testimony for NIH and CDC NCHS. Please contact Sarah Ohlhorst, MS, RD, ASN's Chief Science Policy Officer, for further assistance.

Sincerely,

John E. Courtney, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer, American Society for Nutrition