

Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Legislative Day
February 24, 2016



VAND's 2016 Legislative Day broke records as over 90 RDNs, DTRs, and interns were in attendance to promote our profession. VAND's legislative consultant, Andrew Lamar, had been keeping us informed with weekly updates on the legislation of interest in anticipation for our visits with legislators. The impressive showing, coupled with enthusiasm, made for a productive day advocating for food and nutrition related issues!

The day started at the Virginia State Capitol with brief introductions from Nicole Brown, VAND President, Angie Hasemann, VAND State Policy Representative, and Andrew Lamar, VAND Legislative Consultant. Senator William Stanley, Jr. gave us a warm welcome by speaking about the impact that our nutrition expertise has on the health of Virginia citizens, especially those living in poverty and underserved areas. He reminded us that our advocacy work does not end after Legislative Day. Senator Stanley encouraged us to continue our advocacy work during the entire year, a theme that would resonate throughout the day.

In the morning, attendees sat down with their legislators and aides to discuss all things food and nutrition related. This was our opportunity to highlight the role of the RDN and the impact that we make in promoting health and wellness. We engaged with our Senators and Delegates in discussing the legislative priorities supported by VAND. Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn and Senator William Stanley, Jr. gave VAND a shout-out from the Senate and House galleries and recognized the important work that RDNs do to support the health of Virginia citizens.

Legislative Day concluded with guest speaker Heidi Hertz, MS, RD; Obesity Prevention Coordinator from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. We learned about programs which aim to improve access to healthy foods (Fresh Spot), raise awareness of the health effects of sugar sweetened beverages (Rev Your Bev), and provide school-age children with a healthy breakfast (Great Starts with Breakfast). Heidi emphasized the impact that health related policy changes at the local level can have in creating and supporting a healthier community, and encouraged us to seek out these needs within our own workplace. This message underlined the importance of continued advocacy for nutrition-related issues.

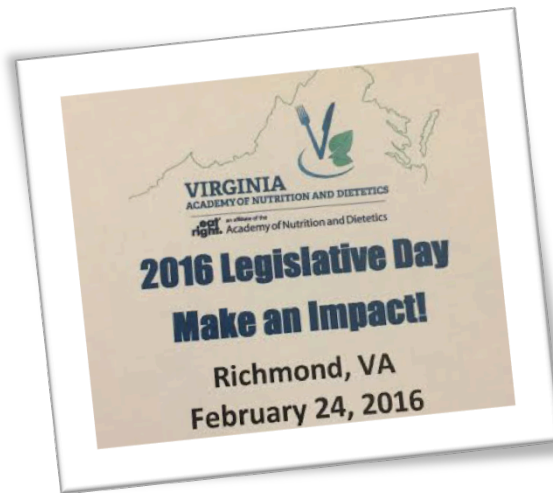
There are just two weeks remaining in this year's legislative session. You can review the full list of 2016 legislation updates [here](#).

Thank you for all of your work and the impact that you make every day in creating a healthier Virginia!

Kelsey Guth, RDN

VAND Consumer Protection Coordinator





"Legislative Day was a great opportunity to see how nutrition and public policy interact with each other. As a nutrition student, I never understood the correlation between law and nutrition. Now, I am aware of exactly how important it is to express our opinions at the state level as a cohesive nutrition community. It was so exciting to hear the positive feedback from legislators of bills that relate to nutrition, such as the Breakfast After the Bell bill. I would recommend that any student, dietetic intern, or dietitian attend Legislative Day at least once!"

*Emma Craig
UVAHS Dietetic Intern*

"I will say for myself that it's a great feeling knowing that we (VAND members) represent a team of nutrition professionals that are not only experts in our respective areas; we work really hard as change agents for food and nutrition policy as well."

*Nana Ataa Ofosu-Benefo, MS, RD, CDN
DLR GRAND District*

"This was my first time participating in Legislative Day, I was unsure what to expect and apprehensive about not being knowledgeable enough to speak to legislators. Being mentored by Registered Dietitians with more experience helped me feel comfortable and I gained confidence and learned the importance of getting involved in advocacy! I am so glad that I had the opportunity to participate, it was a great learning experience."

*Shelby Santin
Virginia Tech Dietetic Intern*



RDNs and VSU Dietetic Interns meet with
Senator Scott Garrett



SVAND members and Senator John
Edwards



Delegate Filler-Corn chats with NVAND
members



Martha Campbell, MA,
RD and VCU Dietetic
Interns Casey Gary and
Ashley Moody pose with
Delegate Jimmie Massie

