

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Secretary Rollins:

As over 200 members of the medical and research community, we are deeply concerned that the advice in the recently released **2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)** is, at best, confusing, and, at worst, harmful to public health. By rejecting the majority of evidence-based recommendations from the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, we believe the document falls short of its legal mandate—from the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-445) —for the Guidelines to be based on “the preponderance of the scientific and medical knowledge which is current at the time the report is prepared.”¹ This DGA process also does not comply with President Trump’s May 2025 Executive Order No. 14303, “Restoring Gold Standard Science.”²

Instead, the new DGA purports to be based on a newly released “Scientific Foundation,” developed with much less rigor and transparency than the DGAC report. The Scientific Foundation uses inconsistent standards of evidence across food groups, starting from a baseline assumption (without scientific justification) that “minimally processed, naturally nutrient-dense foods are the reference point for dietary guidance.”³ While the authors required no evidence that minimally processed foods are universally beneficial and highly processed foods are harmful, they required an extremely high standard of evidence (“strong causal evidence”) to disprove this assumption.⁴ In contrast, the DGAC applied the same standards of evidence across food groups. Furthermore, the majority of the Scientific Foundation’s evidence reviews were narrative reviews, largely authored by one person. Given that the majority of authors had relevant conflicts of interest and were largely reviewing the

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*. January 2026. https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf

² The White House. “Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science,” May 23, 2025. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/restoring-gold-standard-science/>

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*, p 1. January 2026. https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*, p 1. January 2026. https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf

scientific literature in a non-systematic way, **the risk of bias across the Scientific Foundation's reviews is much higher compared to the DGAC's reviews**, which were systematic, conducted by a group of authors with diverse perspectives, peer reviewed by external reviewers before publication and open to public comment after publication. Our concern over conflicts of interest in the new report is not merely theoretical: **seven of the nine authors had relationships with food and supplement companies, including the meat and dairy industries**.

Additionally, **some of the DGA recommendations have no scientific justification** (e.g., limiting added sugars to 10g per meal), while others conflict with each other. For example, the 2025-2030 DGA continues the longstanding recommendation to limit saturated fat intake to 10% of calories, but simultaneously recommends meeting serving recommendations for protein, dairy, and healthy fats with red meat, full fat dairy, and butter and beef tallow. Attempting to follow these serving recommendations could easily result in exceeding the daily saturated fat limit. Unlike the DGAC, the Scientific Foundation authors seem to have conducted no food pattern modeling, which is used to harmonize food group and nutrient recommendations and avoid contradictions like this one. **This inconsistency is dangerous given the strong and consistent evidence linking saturated fat to increased risk of cardiovascular disease.**⁵ A DGA grounded in science would reinforce the saturated fat limit with recommendations to limit red and processed meat and full-fat dairy, given their high saturated fat content and the association between higher consumption of red meat and increased risks of heart disease and cancer.^{6,7,8} Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and across most racial and ethnic groups in the United States; the stakes could not be higher.⁹

Furthermore, some of the reviews used to justify new recommendations were not generalizable to a healthy population, the target audience for the DGA. For example, a review of the effects of high protein diets for weight management in adults with overweight and obesity was a large part of the justification for a dramatic increase in recommended protein intake for everyone.

Finally, the departure from the 2025 DGAC's recommendations in favor of meat and dairy industry-friendly advice is likely to undermine public trust in the DGA as an evidence-based resource. The conflict of interest is clear not only from the relationships of the Scientific Foundation's authors, but from the USDA's pre-existing (October 2025) commitment to use the DGA to "fortify the American Beef Industry."¹⁰ That is not the purpose of the DGA.

⁵ Dow C. Is saturated fat good or bad? Center for Science in the Public Interest. January 2026. <https://www.cspinet.org/article/saturated-fat-good-or-bad>

⁶ American Institute for Cancer Research. Limit consumption of red and processed meat. American Institute for Cancer Research. <https://www.aicr.org/cancer-prevention/recommendations/limit-consumption-of-red-and-processed-meat/#overview-top-tips>

⁷ American Heart Association. Saturated fats. American Heart Association. August 23, 2024. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/saturated-fats>

⁸ World Cancer Research Fund. Meat and cancer. World Cancer Research Fund. <https://www.wcrf.org/preventing-cancer/topics/meat-and-cancer/>

⁹ Murphy SL, Kochanek KD, Xu J, Arias E. Mortality in the United States, 2023. National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief No. 521. December 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db521.htm>

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry: Strengthening Ranches, Rebuilding Capacity, and Lowering Costs for Consumers. October 2025. <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/10/22/secretary-rollins-announces-plan-american-ranchers-and-consumers>.

We call on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—as well as professional medical and nutrition associations—to issue science-based dietary guidance that truly promotes health and prevents chronic disease. Further, since several government nutrition programs are tied to the DGAs, and the current version is neither scientifically sound nor detailed enough to guide implementers, we urge the agencies to provide further guidance for implementation that is grounded in scientific consensus.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Gardner, PhD, Rehnborg Farquhar Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine

Dr. David L. Katz, MD, MPH, Founding Director, Yale University Prevention Research Center; Founder, True Health Initiative

Dr. Walter C. Willett, MD, DrPH, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Abigail Glick, BS, Cornell University

Alaina Castro, PA-C, RD, Stanford Healthcare

Dr. Alan Desmond, National Health Service

Alex Baralt, MBA, Physicians for the Future

Alexa Barad, PhD, MS, RD, Stanford University

Dr. Alexa Martinelli, DMD, University of Pennsylvania

Alexandria Reimold, PhD, University of California, Davis

Alexis Cole, MS, MPH, RD, CCMS, Food is Medicine Institute, Tufts University

Alisha Banville NAS, Graduate MSAN Student, University of New England

Alyssa Boomgarden, MS, RD, LDN, DipACLM

Amy R. Nichols, PhD, MS, RD, University of California, Davis

Ana Mitchell, MS, RD, Dietetics Faculty, Brigham Young University

Andrea Krenek, PhD, RD, Stanford University

Andrea Wotan, MPH, RDN, CHWC

Andrew M. Freeman, MD, FACC, Founding Chair, American College of Cardiology Nutrition and Lifestyle Workgroup

AnnaMarie Couce, MS, RD, CLC, Rutgers University

Annamarie Rodriguez, MS, RD, LD, DipACLM, FAND, Nutrition Directions LLC

Anne Kolker, MS, RD, DipACLM, Kaiser Permanente

Ashley Lombardi MS, RD, AQ Nutrition and Wellness LLC

Aviva Musicus, ScD, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Ayla Flanagan, Stanford Prevention Research Center, Stanford School of Medicine

Professor Barbara Rolls, PhD, The Pennsylvania State University

Benjamin Levine, PhDc, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Beth Tremblay PhD RN, ANHE and Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action

Dr. Bo Lonnerdal, PhD, University of California Davis

Brad Nelson, PhD, Brigham Young University

Bronwyn Knaebe, MS, RD, CDCES, MNCOME

Brooklin White, MS, RD, LD, Oshi Health

Callie Millward, MS, RD, Penn State University

Cami Manning, MNSD, RD, Clinical Dietitian, Contra Costa (County) Health, CA

Cara Cook, MS, RN, AHN-BC, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Dr. Carlo La Vecchia, MD, University of Milan

Carlos A. Camargo, MD, DrPH, Mass General Hospital and Harvard University

Carolien De Graeve, MD, Private practice

Chad R. Hancock, PhD, Brigham Young University

Chris MacAskill, MS, Stanford

Chrissa Petersen, PhD, RDN, Salt Lake Community College

Christian Behrens PhD. RD, The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Christina Hecht, PhD, University of California Nutrition Policy Institute

Christina Salido, RD, CNSC, Stanford Health Care

Claudia Calderon, RD, Loma Linda University Health

Cynthia Smith, BSD, RN, CFPN, University of Michigan

Danielle L. Lee, MPH, RD, Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Daphene Altema-Johnson, MPH, MBA, RDN, LD, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Daria Igudesman, PhD, MS, RD, AdventHealth

Darren Lov, MS, UCLA Health Policy and Management

David A. Cleveland, PhD, MS, MA, University of California Santa Barbara

David J. Maron, MD, C.F. Rehnborg Professor of Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine

Debbie Fetter, PhD, UC Davis

Dr. Dennis Della Corte, PhD, Brigham Young University

Diana Gonzales-Pacheco, DCN, RD, University of New Mexico

Diane Bussolini, RD, Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Trinity Health of New England

Diane N. Demis, Stanford University

Elise Sheinberg, MPH, RD, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Eliza Leone, MS RD LDN, Community Servings, Harvard Medical School

Eric P. Wilson, MD, JD, Diplomate, American Board of LIfestyle Medicine

Eric Rimm ScD, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Erin Lauckner, MS, RD, LRD

Gabby Headrick, Associate Director of Food and Nutrition Policy, Institute for Food Safety and Nutrition Security

Gene Ahlborn PhD, Brigham Young University

Gina Friel, DNP, CRNP-PC, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health

Dr. Gregory Whetstone, LSW, Temple University

Gretchen L. George, PhD, RD., San Francisco State University

Heather S. Fagnant, MS MPH RD, Tufts University

Heather Nace, RD, LDN, Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine

Heather Schier, PhD, Appalachian State University

Janet C. King, PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 2005 DGAC Chair

Professor Jason Kenealey, PhD, Brigham Young University

Jean A. Welsh, Emory University

Jenna Bernard, MS, RD, Vassar College

Jessica Hope, RN, MSN, NP, Research Scientist, Stanford University School of Medicine

Jessica Torro, MSU DENVER

Jill Edwards, MS, DipACLM, The Plantrician Project

Jillian Chacon, MS, RD, Sutter Health

Jim Kaput PhD, Vydiant

Jing Zhou, PhD, Ingredion Inc.

JoAnn Manson, MD, DrPH, Professor, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Joanne L. Slavin, PhD, RD, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

João Madureira, RD, none

Judith Storch, PhD, FASBMB, DFASN, Rutgers University

Julia Orloff, MS, RD, LD, The Buckeye Ranch

Juliana Haber PhD,

Julie C. Jacobson Vann, PhD, MS, RN, Personal

Julie Hooper, MPH, RD, UCLA

Julie Pike MPH RD, Indiana University Health

Karen W. Donaghy, MS, RDN, Virtua Health

Kaitlyn Harper, PhD, MS, MA, UC Davis

Karen Hawkins MA, RD, Karen Hawkins Nutrition

Dr. Karen Della Corte, PhD, Brigham Young University

Kate Girard, MHS, RD, N/A

Kate Mathias, MS, RD-AP, CSO, CNSC, Stanford

Kathleen Law, MNT Associates & Nourish

Kathryn Cohen, MS, RD, DipACLM, HSS

Kathy Levin, RD, CDCES, DipACLM, NA

Katie Ellison, PhD, RD, LDN, University of Alabama at Birmingham

Katie Wolf, MPH, RD, UNC Chapel Hill

Kayla Kenyon MPHc, University of Washington

Dr. Kent Boyd, DNP, RN, PHN, University of Minnesota

Kim A. Williams, Sr. MD, Individual

Kim Tartaglia, MD, DipABLM, The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Kylie Reed, PhD, Duke University

Dr. Latressa Gordon, DNP,MSN,RN, Stanford University

Laura Eckhardt, MS, RD, Cargill

Laura Gibson, PhD, University of Pennsylvania

Laura K. Jefferies, PhD of Food Science, Brigham Young University

Lauren Au, PhD, RD, University of California, Davis

Lauren Plunkett, RD LD CDCES

Lawrence J Appel, Johns Hopkins University

Leah Groppo, MS, RD, CDCES, BC-ADM, Stanford Health Care

Lesley E. Schatz, n/a

Lillie Rosenthal, DO, Physician - private practice

Linda Khalil, Khalil Consulting LLC

Lindsay Benton, MHA, RD, HMH

Lindsay Schmitz MS RD LD, Private practice dietitian

Lindsey Smith Taillie, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Lisa Marie Schultz, Stanford Medicine Children's Health

Lisa R. Young, PhD, RD, Adjunct professor of nutrition, NYU

Livia Augustin, PhD human nutrition, National Cancer Institute Pascale, Naples, Italy

Lori Dorfman, DrPH, MPH, University of California, Berkeley

Lorreene Ritchie, PhD, RD (emeritus), Nutrition Policy Institute, Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California

Lynne LoPresto PhD, RDN, DipACLM, Dominican University of California

Madelyn Hirsch Fernstrom, PhD, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Marcia Nahikian-Nelms, PhD, RD, Professor, Emeritus The Ohio State University

Marian L Neuhouser, PhD, RD, Professor, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

Marie Kanagie-McAleese MD, dipABLM, UM UCMC

Marion Nestle, New York University, Emerita

Mark E. Rifkin, MS, RD

Mary K. Canales, retired emeriti professor UW-Eau Claire

Mary K. Muth, PhD, National Center for Food & Agricultural Policy

Mary Purdy, MS, RD, Nutrient Density Initiative AND The Culinary Institute of America

Mary Story PhD, Professor, Duke University

Matthew Landry, PhD, RD, DipACLM, University of California, Irvine

Maureen McCoy, MS, RD, College of Health Solutions, Arizona State University

Dr. McKenna Halverson, University of Delaware

Meagan Grega, MD, Kellyn Foundation

Megan Orciari, Stanford School of Medicine

Megan Schmalenberger RD,LD,CNSC, OhioHealth

Meir Stampfer, MD, MPH, DrPH, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Mel Nolan, RD, MSc, NHS University Hospitals

Melina Jampolis, MD, Private practice

Melissa Herrmann Dierks RD, LDN, CDCES, Eat Smart Nutrition Co.

MeMe Roth, National Action Against Obesity

Dr. Meryem Talbo, Stanford University

Michael F. Jacobson, PhD, National Food Museum

Michael Greger, MD, FACLM, NutritionFacts.org

Michelle Cen, Viva Longevity

Michelle Hauser, MD, MS, MPA, DipABLM, DABOM, FACP, FACLM, Chef, Stanford University School of Medicine

Michelle Zuelch, PhD MS RD, University of California Davis

Miguel Ramos, Evidence-Based Nutrition

Minal Moharir, Stanford University

Minna Kohler MD RhMSUS , Massachusetts General Hospital

Nancy Rozgony, MS, RD, LDN, CDCES, Ascension Saint Agnes Diabetes Education Program

Natasha Tasevska, M.D., Ph.D., College of Health Solutions, Arizona State University

Nathalie Lambrecht, PhD, Stanford University

Neha Shah, MD, Stanford University

Nicole Mackey, MS, RD, CSSD, Stanford Healthcare

Ocean Robbins, Food Revolution Network

Olivia Grieco, MS, Tufts University

Professor Patrick O. Brown, MD, PhD, Stanford University School of Medicine

Patrick Elliott, BSc, MPH, PhD(c), University College Dublin, Ireland

Peggy Ann Berry, PhD, RN, COHN-S, FAAOHN, Thrive at Life: Working Solutions

Peter Jeff, Bournemouth University, UK

Peter Lurie, MD, MPH, Associate, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and President, Center for Science in the Public Interest

Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, PhD, RD

Rachel E. Gaffen MS, RD, LDN, ACEND

Rachel K. Johnson, PhD, RD, MPH, FAHA, University of Vermont

Rachel Landrum, MD, MA, Duke University Medical Center

Randall S. Stafford, MS, PhD; Professor of Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine

Rani Agrawal, Stanford University

Rebecca Hinojosa, MS, RN, LDN, Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine

Rebecca Ramsing, MPH, RD

Dr. Richard Kirwan PhD , Liverpool John Moores University

Robin DeWeese, PhD, RDN, Arizona State University, College of Health Solutions

Roopa Kalyanaraman Marcello, DrPH, MPH, CPH, Independent Public Health Strategist

Roujheen Sabetan, MPH, Stanford University

Sapna Peruvemba, MS, RD, Loma Linda University

Sarah Schuette, Dietetic Student, UC Berkeley Master of Nutritional Sciences & Dietetics Program

Savana Greene, MS, CHLA

Scott Stoll, MD, The Plantrician Project

Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, Harvard University

Sheri Gaw, RD, CDCES, El Camino Hospital

Dr. Shireen Kassam, MD, PhD, University of Winchester

Shoa L. Clarke, MD, PhD, FAHA, Stanford University

Shu Wen Ng, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Public Health Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Sonja Hess, PhD, University of California, Davis

Steven Clinton, MD, PhD, Ohio State University, 2015 DGAC Member

Steven Gortmaker, PhD, Professor of the Practice of Health Sociology Emeritus, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health

Susan Devaraj PhD, MS, RD, Omada Health

Susan Fullmer, PhD, RD, CD, Teaching Professor, Brigham Young University

Tambra Raye Stevenson, MS, MPH, Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture (WANDA)

Tamiko Katsumoto MD, DipABLM, Stanford University

Tanya Haffner, RD, CEO of MyNutriWeb - the Nutrition Education Hub

Tessa Comstock, MS, RD, LD, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Tiffany Bruno, MS, RD, Claremont Graduate University

Tina Morcos, MS, MPH

Tyler J Titcomb, PhD, RD, LD, University of Kansas Medical Center

Valarie Jernigan, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences, 2025 DGAC Member

Vijaya Parameswaran MS, RD, PhD, Stanford University, School of Medicine

Vinita Singh, BDS, Dip. IBLM, Dip. Sports Nutrition, Cert. CHEF-Coaching, Cert. Nutrition Science, Founder- Wellness Works

Virginia Erwin MS RD CHC CPT, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Xavier Pi-Sunyer, MD, MPH, Columbia University

Yash Naidu MA, RD, Sutter Health

Yasmine Bouzid, PhD, RD, University of California, Davis

Yen Ang, DrPH, MSc, MPH, RD, President, Asian Pacific Islander Caucus of American Public Health Association

Zahra Kassam MBBS FRCPC DipABLM, University of Toronto

Zoe Griffiths BSc, MSc, Cert. Ed RNutr FAfN, ZG Nutrition