

Karen K. Ehrens

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**Connecting people to health & wellness through
communication, coordination, advocacy, and food & nutrition**
as the owner of *Ehrens Consulting*, 8/98-present, Bismarck, ND

Coordination & Leadership

- *Coordinator, 4/2013-present; Healthy North Dakota*, Bismarck
Facilitate statewide network bringing together public and private stakeholders to identify common strategies to address health issues through innovative statewide partnerships. Plan meetings, provide training and technical assistance to partners, seek funding for partners through grants and other mechanisms, help translate prevention research into action.
- *Coordinator, Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Coalition*, 2008-present, Bismarck
Provide facilitation of action plan, organization and meeting planning functions for this statewide coalition of federal, state, non-profit and farm organizations working to eliminate hunger in the state by 2019; to address root cause of food insecurity, member of NDESPA, a coalition working to build assets for North Dakotans with low and moderate incomes.
- *Chair, Go! Bismarck Mandan Community Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition*, 10/15 – 9/16, Bismarck
Lead through strategic planning process and reorganization; re-visited mission and vision; planned and led meetings; coordinated member efforts with identified needs of community health needs assessments; recruited new member organizations; with executive team, hired coordinator.
- *Coordinator, Healthy Kids/Healthy Weight initiative*, 2007-12, Bismarck
Statewide pilot project to connect families to community healthy eating and physical activity resources through their healthcare practitioners, improve healthcare professional reimbursement and ultimately reduce the rate of childhood overweight.
- *Chair, 10/2009 – 9/2010; Prairie Public Broadcasting Board of Directors*, Fargo
Considered existing and new corporate policies and made recommendations for Board action; evaluated corporate leadership structure, continuity and succession planning; evaluated the President/CEO and recommended compensation package to the Board.
- *Coordinator, 7/2000 through 12/2009, Moving More, Eating Smarter Communities Program*, ND Department of Health, Bismarck
Provide technical assistance, training, grant oversight, budget management, program evaluation and coordination of media campaigns for seventeen nutrition and physical activity coalitions throughout North Dakota. Cooperate with state agriculture and education agencies to implement statewide pilot school garden program. Coordinated and participated in the design and implementation of a worksite-based fruit & vegetable promotion program that has reached more than 1000 state employees and helped them to change their behavior and work environment.
- *Child Nutrition Specialist 8/93-6/98, Child Nutrition Programs*, ND Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck
Coordinated North Dakota state agency efforts and developed a three-year plan to implement comprehensive federal regulatory changes to improve the healthfulness of school meals. Planned, wrote and conducted training for school foodservice personnel and administrators. Provided technical assistance to and conducted on-site monitoring reviews of schools in implementing the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Supervised staff conducting computerized nutrient analysis of menus and conducted nutrient analysis.

Communication

- *Consultant*, 9/2006-2013, Healthy North Dakota & Hunger Free North Dakota, Bismarck
Provide information about the benefits of prevention and collaboration to local, state, federal and non-profit leaders and to North Dakota citizens through the Healthy North Dakota website, at meetings and conferences. Create, organize, provide content and direct the websites www.healthynd.org & hungerfreend.org. Coordinate and produce *Story Well*, which is gathering the stories of people living with or overcoming challenges to their health or the health of friends and loved ones. Contributing author to the *Burden of Cardiovascular Disease in North Dakota*, 2007, the *Burden of Diabetes in North Dakota*, 2009, and the 2016 State Health Improvement Plan.
- *Public Speaker*, 1998-present
Speak to community groups, legislators and professional organizations about fruits and vegetables, farmers markets, local foods, childhood obesity, reducing food insecurity, food safety and nutrition; over 30 local and statewide television and radio interviews on these topics.

Advocacy

- *Candidate*, 3/2016-11/2016; North Dakota House of Representatives, District 32, Bismarck
Knocked on more than 4,000 constituent doors to initiate discussions about representation; raised funds, participated in forums, wrote social media posts, made phone calls, and engaged in political strategizing.
- *Past Chair*, 2014; *Chair*, 2013; *Vice Chair*, 2012; *Member*, 1/2011-5/2015, Legislative and Public Policy Committee (LPPC), Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND).
Guided establishment of public policy for a 100,000-member membership organization of food and nutrition professionals including federal and state public policy, legislative and regulatory issues including child nutrition, senior nutrition and medical nutrition therapy; chaired 2012 Farm Bill work group to establish priorities for advocacy.
- *Public Policy Chair*, 7/2003-5/2010, North Dakota Dietetic Association
Advocated for policies to improve the health and nutrition environment; wrote and provided testimony to state legislature and US Congress on proposed legislation impacting health and nutrition; analyzed proposed and current legislation for impact on children, adults and health care providers; tracked health and nutrition state and federal legislation; corresponded with federal legislators and staff.
- *Project facilitator*, 11/2006-12/2008, photography exhibit, ND Department of Health
Coordinated the development and ongoing exhibit that highlights health disparities of American Indians living in North Dakota to raise awareness and encourage action for change.
- *Congressional Intern* 3/92-5/92, Representative Byron Dorgan (ND), Washington, DC
Researched bill and law status through the Library of Congress; conducted special issue research; prepared written constituent correspondence; reception and phone duties.

Food and Nutrition

- *Local Foods Consultant*, 9/2008 – 4/2016, ND Department of Agriculture, Bismarck
Provided technical assistance to communities in implementing local foods systems connecting production to eating to help more people eat food grown in North Dakota; assisted with Hunger Free Garden Project that connects gardeners and growers who have contributed more than one million pounds of produce to area food pantries.
- *Instructor*, 2005 – present, public cooking classes and demonstrations, Bismarck
With chef/husband, teach cooking classes to share cooking techniques and recipes with a focus on the Mediterranean Diet adapted to the local prairie region and incorporating more vegetables into people's everyday eating patterns.

Grant Writing – More than \$469,500 brought to public health projects in North Dakota
In 2016, successfully wrote for a \$10,000 Community Innovation grant from the Consensus Council/Bush Foundation to increase childhood immunizations. In 2014, co-wrote a grant for \$125,000 from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to reduce hypertension and wrote for a \$10,000 grant from the Bush Foundation to fund a statewide hunger summit. In 2011, successfully wrote grants for \$5000 from ELCA World Hunger/Education Advocacy to support a statewide hunger conference, \$2500 from the Dakota West Arts Council to support a Suzuki music institute, and was one of team of 3 to write for a Community Transformation Grant from the CDC for \$337,000 to support community engagement to solve health issues in North Dakota.

Education

- Certificate in the Core Concepts of Public Health, University of Minnesota School of Public Health via online technology, 2005
- Dietetic Internship, Veterans' Administration Medical Center, San Diego, CA, 1993
- Bachelor of Science, Food and Nutrition, Traditional Program in Dietetics, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 1992
- Bachelor of Arts, French, Minot State University, Minot, ND, 1987

Credentials

- Commission on Dietetic Registration - Registered Dietitian # R803025
- North Dakota Board of Dietetic Practice License # 416

Professional Organizations

- Member, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 1992-present; member Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, Food & Culinary Professionals and Public Health & Community Nutrition practice groups
- North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Public Policy Chair, 2003-2010; Media Spokesperson for Western ND, 1999-2003; Chair, Registration and Continuing Education, 1994-96
- Member, Bismarck-Mandan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the North Dakota Nutrition Council
- Member, North Dakota Coordinated Chronic Disease Prevention Workgroup, 2011 - present
- North Dakota Healthy Heart Council, Steering Committee, 1997-2002

Community Organizations

- Prairie Public Broadcasting Board of Directors, Chair, 2010; Vice-Chair, 2009; Secretary, 2008; elected 2005; North Dakota Public Radio Advisory Council, 1999-2005
- Bismarck-Mandan Garden Club, 2001-present
- Cathedral Area Historic District Neighborhood Organization, 1996-present
- Bismarck Public Schools Health Council, 2004-2013
- Roosevelt Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization, Outdoor Learning & Planting Coordinator, 2006-2012
- First Presbyterian Church, Elder, 2014 – 2016; Worship and Music Committee, 2003-2009
- International Club of Bismarck & Mandan, Chairperson, 2001-2002; Treasurer, 1999-2001

Awards

- Katherine Burgum Outstanding Student Scholarship at NDSU, 1992
- Outstanding Student Dietitian, NDSU, 1992
- Emerging Dietitian of the Year, North Dakota Dietetic Association, 2002
- Outstanding Dietitian of the Year, North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2009
- Excellence in Hunger & Environmental Nutrition Award, Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2011
- 2015 Hunger Relief Champion, Great Plains Food Bank, Fargo, ND, 2015
- Excellence in Public Health & Community Nutrition Award, Public Health & Community Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2016