

Karen K. Ehrens

233 West Avenue C
Bismarck, ND 58501-3608
Phone/fax: 701-223-2616
email: karen@ehrensconsulting.com

**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, 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; to address root cause of food insecurity, member of NDESPA, a coalition working to build assets for North Dakotans with low and moderate incomes.
- *Coordinator, 4/2013 – 9/2017; 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. Facilitate the North Dakota State Health Improvement Plan, help translate prevention research into action, identify gaps in local and statewide health, lead and organize meetings, provide training and technical assistance to partners, seek funding for partners through grants and other mechanisms. Brought health equity to each meeting's agenda, and sought ways to
- *Chair, Go! Bismarck Mandan Community Nutrition and Physical Activity Coalition*,
10/2015 - 9/2016, 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 - 2012, 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 - 2/2009, Moving More, Eating Smarter Communities Program*,
North Dakota 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 across 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 8/1993 - 6/1998, Child Nutrition Programs*, North Dakota
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 & Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota, North Dakota Department of Health, Bismarck*

Provide information about the benefits of prevention and collaboration to local, state, federal and non-profit leaders and to North Dakota citizens through social media, and speaking with media, and at meetings and conferences. Create, organize, provide content and direct the websites including hungerfreend.org. Coordinate and produce *Story Well*, gathering 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 for North Dakota.

- *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

- *Consultant, 3/2017 – 12/31/2018, Health for All North Dakota, Bismarck*

Worked to protect the safety net programs of Medicaid and SNAP by engaging and energizing groups most impacted. Constituencies included consumer, family, institutional health care, farm and faith-based groups. Work included organizing round tables, drafting letters to the editor, hosting events, and encouragement of self-empowered story-telling and speaking out.

- *Farm Bill Work Group Co-Chair, 1/2017 – 12/31/2018; 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; current co-chair and in 2012 chaired Farm Bill work group to establish organization priorities for advocacy.

- *Candidate, 3/2016-11/2016; North Dakota House of Representatives, District 32 Democratic-NPL Party, Bismarck*

Knocked on more than 4,000 constituent doors to initiate discussions about representation; raised funds, participated in forums, developed social media posts, made phone calls, and engaged in political strategizing.

- *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 highlighted 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

- *Vice Chair*, 2/2018 – present, and steering committee, North Dakota Local Foods Development Alliance, Bismarck
Help to form and launch new statewide alliance to expand opportunities for the production, resource gathering, aggregation, distribution, promotion, consumption and policy change of North Dakota foods with statewide farming, education, government and economic development organizations.
- *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 2.8 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 \$509,500 brought to public health projects in North Dakota
Has successfully helped write for Community Innovation grants from the Consensus Council/ Bush Foundation to increase childhood immunizations, a statewide hunger summit and local foods initiatives. In 2014, co-wrote *Million Hearts* grant for \$125,000 from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to reduce hypertension. In 2011, 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 with minor in Political Science, Minot State University, 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; and practice groups Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, Food & Culinary, and Public Health & Community Nutrition
- North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Public Policy Chair, 2003-2010; Media Spokesperson, 1999-2003; Chair, Registration/Continuing Education, 1994-96
- Member, Bismarck-Mandan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the North Dakota Nutrition Council
- Member, American Public Health Association, 2017- present and North Dakota Public Health Association 2005 - present
- Member, North Dakota Coordinated Chronic Disease Prevention Workgroup, 2011 - present
- North Dakota Healthy Heart Council, Steering Committee, 1997-2002

Volunteering

- NDSU Student Environmental Action Committee, 1991-92
- Delivering meals at home to people with HIV/AIDS through *Mama's Kitchen*, San Diego, 12/92 – 5/93
- Delivering meals to home-bound seniors and people with illnesses through Bismarck *Meals on Wheels* during one month annually from 2002-present and delivering Commodity Supplemental Food Program food packages to seniors in homes on occasion
- Coordinating Bismarck area community gardeners who grow produce for donation to area food pantries through the Hunger Free North Dakota Garden Project, 2012-present
- Member, Advisory Committee, Bismarck Global Neighbors, 12/17- 12/19

Community Organizations

- *Health Equity Committee*, North Dakota Department of Health, member 10/2016 - present
- *BisMarket* Farmers Market Board of Directors, Co-chair, Past Chair 1/2018 – 11/2020
- North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People, Board of Directors, Member, 2/2017 – 5/2018
- Prairie Public Broadcasting Board of Directors, 2005-2010; Chair, 2010; Vice-Chair, 2009; Secretary, 2008; North Dakota Public Radio Advisory Council, 1999-2005
- First Presbyterian Church, Elder, 2014 – 2016; Worship and Music Committee, 2003-2009
- *International Club of Bismarck & Mandan*, Chairperson, 2001-2002; Treasurer, 1999-2001
- Bismarck Public Schools Health Council, Parent & Community member, 2004-2013
- Roosevelt Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization, Outdoor Learning & Planting Coordinator, 2006-2012
- Bismarck-Mandan Garden Club, 2001-present
- Cathedral Area Historic District Neighborhood Organization, 1996-present

Awards

- "Woman of the Year," North Dakota Women's Network, for dedication to improving the lives of women of North Dakota, 2018
- Excellence in Public Health & Community Nutrition Award, Public Health & Community Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2016
- 2015 Hunger Relief Champion, Great Plains Food Bank, Fargo, ND
- Excellence in Hunger & Environmental Nutrition Award, Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2011
- Outstanding Dietitian of the Year, North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2009
- Emerging Dietitian of the Year, North Dakota Dietetic Association, 2002
- Katherine Burgum Outstanding Student Scholarship at NDSU, 1992
- Outstanding Student Dietitian, NDSU, 1992