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Margo Wootan, DSc Receives the 2021 ACPP Health Promotion Policy Award for Individual Contribution to Policy Change

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 1, 2021) – Each year, the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) and the Advisory Committee on Public Policy (ACPP) recognizes an individual or group instrumental in nutrition education policy change that forwards the Society’s mission of advancing food and nutrition education research, practice, and policy that promote equity and support public and planetary health.

Margo G. Wootan, DSc, is president of MXG Strategies, a company she founded after leaving a 30-year career with the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) where she served as vice president for nutrition. This year’s award will be announced during the 2021 SNEB Annual Conference held virtually on August 8 – 10 and presented at the Advisory Committee on Public Policy Open Meeting on Wednesday, September 15.

Under her leadership, nutrition education policy accomplishments include:

- Coordinating a national coalition to pass the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. As a result of this law, USDA updated the national nutrition standards for vending machines, school stores, a la carte items, and school fundraisers to significantly improve the nutritional quality of school foods. Passing this Act involved working with the Obama Administration, educating and mobilizing parents, health professionals, local school districts, members of Congress and their staffs, and coordinating advocacy activities.
- Leading the effort to require trans fat labeling on packaged foods, which contributed to removing trans fats from the U.S. food supply.
- Working with over two dozen companies to reduce unhealthy food marketing aimed at children. This was accomplished alongside Senator Tom Harkin, including securing funding for the Institute of Medicine’s report: *Food Marketing to Children and Youth*. This report is the most comprehensive review of food marketing to children. She also worked with Senator Harkin to require the Federal Trade Commission to study the amount of money spent on food marketing to children.
- Organizing the national effort to help consumers make informed choices through menu labeling in chain restaurants. The support of policymakers, health professionals and concerned citizens resulted in the introduction of 40 state and local menu labeling bills, of which 17 have become law. National menu labeling was enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

A longtime and active member of SNEB, Dr. Wootan is one of the most accomplished nutrition educators and advocates in the field. In the 25 years since getting her nutrition degree from Cornell University, Dr. Wootan established and ran one of the largest and most effective nutrition coalitions in the country that, under her leadership, has resulted in increased funding for nutrition and physical activity promotion, and led to successful passage of historic legislation that provided more

resources and set stronger standards for foods and beverages provided in schools. Dr. Wootan co-founded and coordinated the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA), of which SNEB is an active member. This 520-member coalition is recognized as the preeminent voice of the nutrition community and has been instrumental in strengthening nutrition and physical activity funding, programs, and policies at the national, state and local levels.

Under Dr. Wootan's leadership, NANA and SNEB helped strengthen the Child Nutrition programs. Specifically, Dr. Wootan was a successful leader and advocate for stronger school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, nutrition education, higher school lunch reimbursement rates, and expanded training and technical assistance to improve school meals. These policies also give nutrition educators greater flexibility in developing and delivering effective nutrition education and promotion initiatives for low-income families.

Dr. Wootan has complimented her significant national nutrition policy work with community-based nutrition education campaigns and industry focused approaches to assist educators and consumers in their everyday work and choices.

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