learning experience and increase career readiness. The Masters of Science in Nutrition Education (MSNE) program incorporates these principles to prepare nutrition educators.

**Target Audience:** MSNE Alumni from American University, who graduated between 2015-2022.

**Course/ Curriculum Description:** The MSNE is a 30-credit program completed in 20 months or less. Students complete 10, 8-week courses asynchronously online, developing skills to become nutrition educators. This program equips students with a foundation in nutritional science and education and communication skills to design and implement nutrition education programs, share scientific knowledge consistent with current recommendations, incorporate communication strategies such as social marketing, and develop program and intervention skills.

**Evaluation Methods:** In order to better understand interested students and their career success following program completion, an alumni survey was conducted in February of 2023. The survey was sent to 245 students who graduated from the MSNE between 2015-2022, with 59 students responding in a 1-week period providing qualitative and quantitative data.

**Results:** The alumni respondents resided primarily in suburban and urban locations (91.7%) at the time of enrollment and ranged in age from 21-55. Undergraduate degrees ranged from applied mathematics to nutrition to English Literature. Among graduates surveyed, 81% felt moderately or very prepared for a career in nutrition upon graduation despite only 26% of respondents having a background in nutrition. Over half (53%) of the respondents sought out the program due to interest in making a career change, and upon graduation, 71% of students were working in a nutrition and/or health-related position.

**Conclusion:** This program, thoughtfully designed to combine the foundations of nutritional science with an emphasis on nutrition education, prepares students for careers in the field of nutrition.

**Funding:** None

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**SNEB Nutrition Educator Competencies:**

**Food and Nutrition Policy**

**Advancing Food Policy Councils Through SNAP-Ed: From Readiness to Capacity for Future Sustainability**

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**Background:** Food policy councils (FPCs) develop and move forth recommendations for changing policy, systems, and environments (PSE) for strengthening the food system. Increasingly FPCs are active in food equity and obesity prevention efforts. More investigation is needed to understand the readiness, outcomes, and sustainability of these groups.

**Objective:** The study aimed to assess readiness to start or expand a FPC; determine change in multi-sector and priority population engagement and the facilitation of PSE changes adopted as a result of FPC efforts over time; and explore capacity for future sustainability of FPCs.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** Representatives from seven FPCs funded through SNAP-Ed in South Carolina participated in the mixed methods study from February 2021 to 2023.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Semi-structured interviews based on an established readiness framework were analyzed thematically. Tracking forms for multi-sector and priority population engagement and PSE adoption based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework and the Community Engagement Continuum were tabulated across months. Scores using the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool were calculated by domain.

**Results:** Motivations included to build upon existing work, improve food security and healthy food access through policy, and engage community members. Current and needed capacities included internal and external buy-in, resources, and foreseen challenges to overcome. FPC engagement from all sectors increased. The most prevalent sectors reported were business, government, emergency food providers, and libraries while philanthropy, planning, and attorneys were the least prevalent. FPC engagement with priority populations increased with “inform” and “consult” being the most and “delegate” being the least prevalent levels reported. Additionally, twenty-two PSE strategies were adopted. Sustainability scores were highest for the partnerships and adaptation domains and lowest for the strategic planning and funding stability domains.

**Conclusion:** FPCs increased sector and priority population engagement over time and were successful in PSE adoption, though opportunities for technical assistance exist to expand engagement. SNAP-Ed and similar program implementers should also focus supports provided on ensuring long term sustainability of FPCs.

**Funding:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education

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**Analysis of Consumer Cooking Spray Usage and Perspectives in Free-Living and Laboratory Settings**

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**Background:** Nutrition facts labels provide important nutrition information and inform dietary choices. However, studies indicate that reference amounts customarily consumed (RACC) that determine serving size/label contents are not always representative of actual consumer use. Notably, U.S. cooking sprays have a RACC/serving size of 0.25 seconds; this small serving allows products to

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Molesky (continued)

advertise as fat-free/Calorie-free which may mislead consumers making nutrition decisions.

**Objective:** The objective of this study was to determine consumer cooking spray usage, perspectives of use/labeling, and observe usage in a laboratory environment, to inform the appropriateness of the existing RACC.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** This study was conducted in two parts: national usage survey, and laboratory assessment. For the survey, participants (n=1,041, 33.5±16.7 years, 30 states) were recruited locally/via ResearchMatch to complete a questionnaire of cooking spray behaviors including usage, purchasing, and label use. For the laboratory assessment, locally recruited participants (n=30, 29.7±11.0 years), in one laboratory visit, sprayed cooking spray on seven different cookware items while being videoed. Participants were only instructed to spray as they typically would, and spray duration was calculated from the recordings.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Numeric data from the survey and laboratory procedure were tabulated as averages, standard deviations, and ranges. Percentage of instances exceeding a 0.25 second serving in the laboratory assessment was determined.

**Results:** The mean spray time self-reported by consumers was 1.9±0.9 seconds ([0.1, 5.0 seconds]). 80% of respondents indicated using spray at least monthly. Thirty-one point four percent of respondents were somewhat or much more likely to buy spray if labeled “Calorie-free” and 31.8% if labeled “fat-free.” In the laboratory setting, 100% of participant sprays exceeded 0.25 seconds. For example, the mean spray time for small baking-sheets was 1.7±0.8 seconds ([0.3, 4.0 seconds]).

**Conclusion:** Consumer-reported and laboratory-determined cooking spray usage was greater than the current RACC/serving size. This research can inform revision of the current reference amount. Further research can provide improved evidence for other RACCs and ensure consumer confidence in labeling and corresponding health behaviors.

**Funding:** None

**Analyzing the Decision of Not Purchasing Fruit and Vegetables**

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**Background:** Fruit and vegetable (FV) consumption is a necessary, but not sufficient condition of a healthy diet (Silva et al., 2023). From a public policy point of view, as a way to promote consumption, most attention has been focused on FVs purchase determinants, while little attention is being paid to define the population that is not consuming FVs.

**Objective:** Compare sociodemographic characteristics (household income, education of household head, household composition) and consumption characteristics of the population that did not purchase fruit and vegetables between 2011-12 and 2016-17.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** This study uses the Encuesta de Presupuesto Familiares (EPF, Family Budget Survey in English) by the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE, National Statistics Institute of Chile). Particularly, this study uses the waves: EPFVII (2011-12) and EPFVIII (2016-17). Both waves are representative of main urban areas in Chile. Firstly, we compared the descriptive statistics of two survey waves by FVs purchasers (purchasers vs. non purchasers). Then, we estimated marginal effects, change in probability, after a set of probit models.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** We compare the socioeconomic characteristics, household income, education of household head, household composition, and consumption characteristics of FV non-purchasers between 2011-12 and 2016-17. After the descriptive analysis, we use a probit model to show how some determinants are associated to the change of probability of purchasing FVs.

**Results:** According to EPFVII (2011-12), 5.0% of households did not purchase FVs (fresh nor processed). Five years later, according to EPFVIII (2016-17), this share increased to 8.1%. Comparing non-zero FV purchases, the average remains close to 4.3 portions in both survey waves. In other words, the FV purchase decrease is associated to more households not purchasing FVs rather than a large number of households purchasing less FVs.

**Conclusion:** The population share of FV non-purchasers have been increasing, while no research has paid attention to define this segment. We expect that our research would help to avoid that more households stop purchasing FVs.

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**Assessing Change in Food Insecurity Status Among People Seeking Emergency Food Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Background:** Food security is a multidimensional concept consisting of food availability, access, utilization, and stability. However, food security is often measured as a single-dimensional construct with recent considerations for nutrition security.

**Objective:** Using the multidimensional approach as a guiding framework, the purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore how emergency food assistance impacted food security among people seeking food assistance over time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Study Design, Settings, Participants:** Adults between ages 18 and 64, English-speaking, and Florida residents were recruited at emergency food distribution sites in West Central Florida. Participants completed initial

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