Christopher J. Lynch, Ph.D.
Executive Secretary of the NIH Nutrition Research Task Force
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

December 15, 2018


Dear Dr. Lynch,

On behalf of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), which represents more than 16,000 members from around the globe who are involved in all aspects of the science, practice and advancement of gastroenterology, I am pleased to provide comments on the draft strategic plan for NIH nutrition research.

AGA applauds the NIH on drafting a comprehensive and ambitious strategic plan for nutrition research that aims to address critical gaps in evidence around nutrition and its influence on human health. Evidence from nutrition studies that are rigorous, reproducible, and transparent will be invaluable to clinicians, who currently struggle to provide meaningful guidance to their patients on nutritional approaches and interventions. NIH coming forward with this strategic plan is an important step forward for the field.

The draft strategic plan acknowledges the significant role of the gut microbiome in mediating the effects of diet and nutrition on health. This is an important issue for AGA and for its Center for Gut Microbiome Research and Education, whose mission is to advance research and education on the gut microbiome with the goal of improving human health. AGA supports the plan’s emphasis on the role of the microbiome.

AGA looks forward to seeing the impact of the NIH’s nutrition research strategic plan. The AGA’s 2019 James W. Freston Single Topic Conference’s, which focuses on scientific dialogue and opportunities for scientific collaboration and explores new ideas
that may lead to enhanced patient therapies or potential opportunities for cures of digestive diseases, will assemble an international group of investigators interested in the management and treatment of GI sensitivities and disorders through nutrition. Additionally, AGA’s Education and Training Committee has recently identified nutrition as a priority area around which they will develop new guidance and resources for clinicians. NIH nutrition research will have a direct impact on our work. Please contact us if there is any way that we can more proactively contribute to its success. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Jessica Roth, Director, Regulatory Affairs via electronic mail to jroth@gastro.org or via phone at 240.482.3230.

Sincerely,

Sheila E. Crowe, MD, AGAF
Chair, AGA