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Nutrition Efforts Reaching Disability Community
with Support from Walmart Foundation to Association of University Centers on Disabilities

SILVER SPRING, Md. – Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) expands its health efforts with the launch of “Nutrition is for Everyone,” made possible by a $420,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation. Five AUCD-member centers will implement a one-year project providing nutrition education for an estimated 25,000 people with disabilities living in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Tennessee. Based on available public health data, these states are areas where people with disabilities are least likely to be consuming fruits and vegetables and, therefore, in the most need for nutrition education and support.

“We are thrilled AUCD was selected for this funding that benefits our field,” said Andrew Imparato, executive director of AUCD. “We are excited about the Walmart Foundation’s commitment to funding programs that provide nutrition education to underserved communities. Last year, this grant supported AUCD’s direct training of over 67,000 people with disabilities and community members on nutrition. We expect it to have a positive impact on the health of people with disabilities living in the target states.”

AUCD’s “Nutrition is for Everyone” increases the number of people with disabilities receiving nutrition education, fruit and vegetable consumption, and healthy meals eaten at home. Beginning as a pilot last year, AUCD’s centers surpassed outreach goals with creative efforts such as in person cooking classes, social media outreach, and including disability advocates in nutritionist training. This year, the disability community in these five states will receive up to nine hours of direct nutrition education and support provided at a regional and local levels.

“As the number of Americans with diseases caused by poor dietary choices increases, the Walmart Foundation is pleased to continue support of AUCD in educating members of the disability community on nutrition,” stated Karrie Denniston, program manager for the Walmart Foundation. “We desire to see nutritional literacy improve for all segments of society and are proud to be involved in helping to reach persons with disabilities with information that will help them make healthier choices.”

“People with disabilities are not often included in typical nutrition efforts. ‘Nutrition is for Everyone’ includes the disability community in all nutrition outreach and education efforts,” said Dr. Adriane Griffen, director of public health for AUCD. “With this investment, we can make significant impact on health and wellness for people with disabilities.”

This program employs “Nutrition Ambassadors,” experts from AUCD’s member centers, who will help people with disabilities, as well as their families and friends, develop the knowledge to make healthy decisions about their nutritional needs.
The five AUCD members working on this program are in regions with greatest need. These include:

1. Partners for Inclusive Communities at University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Ark.
2. Human Development Center at Louisiana State University, New Orleans, La.
3. Institute for Disability Studies, Hattiesburg, Miss.
4. Center for Learning and Leadership at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, Okla.
5. Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities at University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, Tenn.

AUCD is a national, nonprofit network of university-based centers and programs in every state and territory working to advance policy and practice for people living with disabilities and their families. “Nutrition is for Everyone” builds on AUCD’s Public Health is for Everyone program, which offers resources for public health professionals to create programs for whole communities, including people with disabilities.

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