

# Member Spotlight

## Karin Pennington, MS, RD, LD, FAND



Karin Pennington is a registered dietitian in St. Louis, Missouri, where she uses motivational interviewing techniques and behavior change theories every day to help individuals take steps toward better health. She has a passion for wellness and disease prevention, and believes that “an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure!” Karin currently works at Cigna Healthcare in the Everyday Health Engagement Department, speaking with Cigna customers across the country about disease management (e.g. diabetes, hyperlipidemia, cardiovascular disease) and disease prevention (e.g. weight, healthy eating). She is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Alabama where she teaches an undergraduate “Nutrition in the Lifecycle” course through their distance education nutrition program. Through her work with Cigna, Karin enjoys speaking with individuals from across the country and helps them identify their motivations and barriers for behavior change and take small steps toward better health.

Karin grew up in St. Louis and first became interested in nutrition after having been diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes when she was 19 years old. Not knowing much about the profession, Karin’s passion for nutrition and dietetics developed after she received diet education for diabetes from a local dietitian, Sarah Eber. She wanted to learn more about how to become a dietitian, and connected with another local dietitian, Marilyn Tanner-Blasiar, during a summer break. Karin is grateful for the impact that both Sarah and Marilyn made in her life and career.

Karin earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Truman State University and completed classes for the Didactic Program in Dietetics at St. Louis University (SLU). It was at SLU that Karin first found her passion for research, working in a lab that focused on cell signaling during cardiac infarction. Karin completed a dietetic internship at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in New York, New York, and worked as a dietitian for five years with WIC Overseas and Head Start before returning to school to earn a Master of Science from the University of Alabama. Karin was honored to present her research findings from her graduate research at the 2013 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™.

Karin joined the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group (PHCNPG) in August 2005 when she had recently transitioned to working for the Head Start program after having served as a WIC Nutritionist for WIC Overseas in England. She felt that membership in PHCNPG would give her access to the key nationwide community nutrition trends that would help her to provide better care and support to the children and families that she served. Karin is an active member of the St. Louis Dietetic Association and serves as the Recording Secretary. She is also a member of the Academy’s Research DPG and will begin her term as Chair-Elect in June 2014. Through her career, Karin has received the Missouri Head Start Nutrition Award for her work in the inner city of St. Louis, Missouri. She was also honored by the Academy in December 2013 with admittance as a Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (FAND).

In her free time, Karin enjoys reading and being active. Most of all, Karin enjoys spending time with her two sons (6 years and 1 year of age). Karin loves eating a variety of healthy foods, but her favorite foods are grilled cheese sandwiches and chocolate ice cream.

PHCNPG is proud of Karin's work and appreciates her contributions to research and community nutrition!