



AHF 2025 National Conference

Uniting Passion, Leadership and Inspiration

Join us August 21-23, 2025, in New Orleans at the Hyatt Regency for AHF's 2025 National Conference. AHF's National Conference is the only place where operators can network and learn exclusively from the self-operated healthcare and senior dining industry. AHF and its members are leading the way in healthcare, senior dining, and hospitality.

AHF is pleased to offer CEUs for those attending the conference. Below is a summary of what AHF plans on requesting from each accreditation body:

- Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) – Estimating up to 17.5 total earnable hours
- American Culinary Federation (ACF) – Estimating up to 17.5 total earnable hours
- Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) – Estimating up to 14 total earnable hours (*CDR does not accredit tradeshow hours*)

Certificates of attendance for CEU submission will be provided for each accrediting body after the conclusion of the event. Folgers tour may be accredited separately and only be claimed if you attended. That represents 1.5 credits.

Day 1 – Thursday, August 21

Folgers Chef & Silo Plant Tour and Cupping Event

Pre-Conference Activity | 8:00 AM -12:00 PM | CEUs: est. 1.5

***Registration Required – Free (Operators Only) – Limit 30**

Sponsored and made possible by JM Smucker's

While in New Orleans for the AHF national conference, your partners at the JM Smucker Co. are excited to welcome you to visit our state-of-the-art coffee roasting & manufacturing facility and enjoy a coffee tasting and education (CE credits). You will tour the Folgers facility where we blend, roast, and manufacture Folgers®, Café Bustelo®, 1850® and Dunkin® coffees. You will learn how coffee is grown and cultivated and taste some great coffee all in the festive backdrop of the rich & strong New Orleans culture ahead of the AHF National Conference. Limit 30



operators. This event is open to operators only. Thanks to JM Smucker's support, this activity is free of charge.

St. Louis Cemetery No 1. Tour

Pre-Conference Activity | 9:30-12:00 AM

***Registration Required - \$50 per person, open to all**

The St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is like stepping into a hidden world. Guests will be led by an experienced local guide who is well-versed in the history of New Orleans and St. Louis Cemetery No 1. Learn fascinating facts and surprising stories about the individuals buried within cemetery walls, like Marie Laveau, the legendary Voodoo Queen, and Homer Plessy, the plaintiff who brought the landmark civil rights case Plessy v. Ferguson to the U.S. Supreme Court. Guests will get close and personal with the city's unique above-ground burial structures and learn interesting historical facts along the way. This tour is a must-see for anyone visiting New Orleans! Limit 40 people. The tours will be in groups of 20. The tour lasts about 45 minutes. Tour 1 will leave at 9:30 am Tour 2 will leave at 10:15 am.

Charitable Activity – Project Sunshine & AHF: “Kits for Play”

Pre-Conference Activity | 9:00-10:00 AM

***Registration Required – Free, open to all**

Project Sunshine is a national nonprofit organization providing free, therapeutic play-based programming to hospitalized children. They understand a hospitalized child impacts the whole family; their family-centric, model supports siblings and caregivers as well as patients, ensuring pediatric patients and their families have access to, the joy, creativity, and normalcy that play, provides during difficult times. Stop by to package 5-10 activity kits to help AHF and Project Sunshine provide hundreds of families with activity kits. This activity will be free, but registration will be required.

Every Dollar Counts: Align Financial Performance with Operational Goals

Pre-Conference Deep Dive Session | 1:00-2:30 PM | CEUs: est. 1.5

Speakers: Pam Ohm-Pickock, MS, RDN, LDN (US Foods), Ashleigh Pedersen (Aegis Living), Erin Copley-Johnson (MultiCare Health System)

The motto of the day is “every dollar counts.” Now more than ever, it is critical for every healthcare foodservice leader to know, understand and optimize the key performance indicators of their unique operations. In today's pressure cooker environment, effective management of



foodservice financials is essential for operational viability and success. This session will explore the key performance indicators (KPIs) that drive financial performance in healthcare foodservice operations. Attendees will learn how to leverage benchmarks, interpret financial metrics, and develop actionable strategies for measuring and improving progress over time. Through real-world case studies and storytelling, participants will gain insights of how to align financial goals with operational excellence. Whether a new or seasoned healthcare leader, this session will equip you with the tools and confidence to make data-driven decisions that enhance both financial health and patient satisfaction while communicating the story of your operations to executive leaders.

Defining Deliciousness in Healthcare and Senior Living

Pre-Conference Deep Dive | 2:45-4:14 PM | CEUs: est. 1.5

Speakers: David Kamen, MBA, PCIII (The Culinary Institute of America)

Attendees will be engaged in an interactive discussion to explore and better develop a common tasting language within their operations. The discussion will include examples of how to develop deliciousness by adding different flavorful, textural, and visual ingredients to dishes to appeal to patients and improve the quality of healthcare meals. Examples of the different basic tastes (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami) will be provided. This session includes tastings and would require a classroom style set-up as well as time prior to the session to organize the tastings.

New Attendee Reception

Reception & Networking | 6:00-7:00 PM

Are you a first-time attendee at AHF's National Conference feeling a bit nervous about not knowing anyone and potentially wandering aimlessly? Don't fret any longer! Join us at our New Attendee Reception, happening an hour before our Opening Reception. This isn't your typical networking event. Instead, you'll be part of a small group led by an experienced AHF operator and business partner leader, ensuring you make genuine connections right from the start.

Opening Reception

Reception & Dinner | 7:00-10:00 PM

Sponsored by Hormel Foods and Sysco Corporation

Now that you've kick started your conference with some deep-dive education and training, it's time to relax, network and eat! Join us for an evening of light music, tasty food, and drinks. Thank you to our 2025 Opening Reception sponsors Hormel Foods and Sysco Corporation.



Day 2 – Friday, August 22

Welcome & Keynote: Control the Controllables

Mainstage | 7:45-9:00 AM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Raymont Harris (Elite Mindset & Performance)

First join us for our welcoming words. We will have some fun surprises in store, so don't be late!! Then former NFL star Raymont Harris shares his journey from hardship to success through his "Control the Controllables" framework. Drawing from his NFL career and personal challenges, Raymont reveals eight fundamental skills divided between mindset and performance controls. This engaging presentation equips audiences with practical tools to achieve elite performance in both life and business.

Awards Presentation

Mainstage | 9:15-9:30 AM

Join us as we honor the 2025 winners of the Exemplary Leadership award winner.

AHF FISH Talks: Culinary Trends, Flavor, and Transformations

Mainstage: AHF FISH Talks | 9:30-11:00 AM | CEUs: est. 1.5

Speakers: Christian Gill, Spiceology | Laureen Herzig, Transforming Age | Drew Patterson, Zink Foodservice (Moderator)

Join us for AHF's dynamic FISH Talks (Food, Innovation, Service, and Hospitality). Our FISH Talks are dynamic high-energy, TED-style presentations followed by a moderated panel. This year's we spotlight two forward-thinking culinary leaders tackling pressing challenges and opportunities in healthcare and senior living dining. Chef Laureen Herzig will explore how sustainability and collaboration drive meaningful menu innovation that supports community, culture, and conscious sourcing. Chef Christian Gill will demonstrate how bold, globally inspired flavor can transform health-forward cooking into something truly craveable—without relying on salt. From reimagining flavor profiles to building a more sustainable and inclusive food culture, this session will inspire attendees to push the boundaries of what's possible in healthcare and senior dining.



FISH Talk 1: Rooted in Sustainability: Engaging Teams and Residents for Menu Innovation

Laureen Herzig, Transforming Age

We embrace that sustainability isn't just about the environment—it's about people. Our focus is on continuous training for thoughtfully sourced ingredients, food safety, sustainability, personal growth, and community culture. Attendees will learn:

- How to collaboratively approach menu development.
- The need for a genuine transformation to collaborate with and involve all levels of the organization and community residents.
- How to incorporate sustainability practices into menu development

FISH Talk 2: Rewriting the Recipe: Where Health Meets Craveable Flavor

Christian Gill, Spiceology

This session explores how dialing up culinary creativity and global inspiration can redefine deliciousness without leaning on salt. With a focus on herbs, spices, umami-rich ingredients, and mindful cooking techniques, we'll uncover how to deliver craveable, exciting food while supporting health and longevity.

- Attendees will learn how to reduce sodium without sacrificing flavor, using a flavor-forward approach grounded in evidence-based culinary techniques, to improve satisfaction and health outcomes in healthcare and senior living communities.

FISH Talk Moderated Panel Discussion

Moderator: Drew Patterson, Zink Foodservice

After the presentations, join both speakers for a panel discussion moderated by Drew Patterson to dive deeper, ask questions, and explore how these innovations can be applied in your own operations.

Maximizing Impact: Proving Value, Protecting Teams, and Responding to Threats in Operations Big & Small

Mainstage | 11:15-12:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Lori-Ann Williams (Montefiore Nyack Hospital) | Derrick Claprood (OhioHealth) | Timothy Schoonmaker (AdventHealth) | John Herzog (DM&A) (Moderator)



In today's healthcare foodservice landscape, leaders in self-operated facilities must actively prove their value to prevent contractor takeovers. This session, led by Lori-Ann Williams and other AHF members, will explore strategies for demonstrating the unique benefits of self-operation and protecting your facility from contractor bids. Drawing from Lori-Ann's experience transforming a community hospital from contracted to self-operated management, the session will focus on actionable tactics for responding to contractor bids and how contractors are evolving their tactics to reassert control over self-operated facilities. Lori-Ann will share how her team overcame challenges like limited resources, low staff engagement, and strained relationships, while also building trust with the C-suite and securing critical funding. Attendees will learn how to showcase the value of their operations through staff engagement, community partnerships, and operational improvements that resonate with both leadership and the local community. This session is essential for leaders looking to protect their self-operated facilities from contractor bids and ensure long-term success. Join us to explore how passion, leadership, and innovation can safeguard your foodservice operation and prove its value to key stakeholders.

AHF Tradeshow & Lunch

Tradeshow Hall | 12:30-4:00 PM | CEUs: 3.5* (*ANFP and ACF Only*)

Our National Conference Tradeshow is one of our most loved events. Our vendors will be ready and waiting for you in the AHF Tradeshow Hall. Head over to explore new products, services, innovations, and more from our valued partners and sponsors. Be sure to check out your Business Partner Directory in your registration bag. Lunch will be served by vendors in the hall – so grab some plates while you explore the hall and taste the latest offerings from food and beverage vendors. This is your chance to line up new products and services tailored to support self-operators.

**Please note that CDR does not accredit tradeshow hours.*

AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Transforming Tomorrow's Leaders: Strategies for Foodservice Management Rotations

Concurrent Session | 4:15-5:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Levin Dotimas, MS, RDN, CD (Intermountain Health) | Emily Patton, PhD, RDN, CD (Brigham Young University)



With the changing landscape of healthcare and a projected shortage of newly credentialed registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), it is increasingly important to recruit dietetic students into the healthcare foodservice sector. While most dietetic students enter clinical practice after completing their dietetic internship, fewer students actively pursue a career in healthcare foodservice. In this session, speakers will describe Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) requirements related to management and leadership development. Attendees will learn practical tips on planning and facilitating an effective foodservice management rotation.

Retail Strategies in a Lean Healthcare World

Concurrent Session | 4:15-5:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Julie Meddles, MS, RDN (The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center), Chris Basmagy (The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center), Michael Vetro (St. Jude Children's Hospital), Gary Goettl (Kestgo)

Healthcare foodservice directors can enhance their retail programs by forming external partnerships. It's important to determine when it's most efficient for a director or manager to collaborate with external entities versus handling tasks internally. Strategically incorporating elements like food trucks, guest restaurants, vending machines, and leased onsite restaurants can diversify food service options for customers while reducing labor costs. Effective oversight of these partnerships ensures smooth operations and potential financial benefits for the organization. When managing third-party vendors, food safety is a crucial consideration. For food trucks, directors need to address sourcing, rules of engagement, scheduling management, and placement. Guest restaurants require careful contracting, rotation planning, return on investment analysis, and integration with existing menu offerings. Vending strategies should consider smart vending options, suitable conditions, and optimal locations. Leasing third-party restaurants involves negotiating contracts, assessing investments and ROI, selecting menus, and planning for contingencies if the vendor leaves. Understanding customer perceptions and enhancing their experience is key to the success of these initiatives.

Elevating Senior Dining: Creating Flexible Meal Plans that Satisfy Residents and Meet Budget Goals

Concurrent Session | 4:15-5:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Christopher Voorman, RD (Fellowship Life, House of the Good Shepherd)

With rising food and labor costs, senior dining plans can become restrictive and stale without adapting. Flexible meal plans create a balance between balancing your budget and meeting and exceeding the expectations of your residents. Explore the steps to implement and enhance a flexible meal plan in your senior dining community.



AHF's 2025 National Culinary Competition

Reception | 6:00-8:15 PM

Sponsored by JM Smucker, Delegate Group, Zink Foodservice, CJ Schwan's, and Butterball Foodservice.

Join us as five culinary teams meet on the national stage to compete for AHF Culinary Gold! Each year our five teams compete for Gold, Silver, and Bronze spots across a 75-minute timed competition with set ingredient options selected from AHF's curated Market Basket. Join us to cheer on our competitors while you enjoy dinner and drinks. No special attire is required, simply come ready to eat, network, and celebrate our competitors! Thanks to our sponsors: JM Smucker, Delegate Group, Zink Foodservice, CJ Schwan's, and Butterball Foodservice.

Day 3 - Saturday August 23

Rise & Shine! It's AHFs Free Morning Exercise Activity

Networking Event | 6:30-7:00 AM

Join us for AHF's free exercise activity! This will be a short and fun way to make new friends and wake-up before starting the day's sessions. Attendees will take a walk with AHF and conference planning committee leaders. This will be a great time to chat, take some photos, and get out of the hotel.

Business Partner Debrief Breakfast (Invite Only)

By Invitation Only | 7:30-8:15 AM

A breakfast for AHF's sponsors and exhibitors. Each company is asked to send just one representative to join us and provide feedback on their experience while mingling with AHF leadership.



The Future of Foodservice: C-Suite Perspectives on Innovation, Strategy & Flexibility

Mainstage | 8:30-9:45 AM | CEUs: est. 1.25

Speakers: Elizabeth Garcia (MD Anderson Cancer Center) | Valerie Herrera (Alaska Native Tribal Consortium) | Chris Butler (Adams Health) | Georgie Shockey (Ruck-Shockey Associates, Inc.) - Moderator

Join us for a dynamic C-Suite panel moderated by Georgie Shockey from Ruck-Shockey Associates. Top executives will discuss the future of foodservice in healthcare and senior dining. This session will provide valuable insights into how foodservice operations are becoming integral to broader organizational strategies. Panelists will explore the evolving role of foodservice in patient/resident satisfaction, employee well-being, cost containment, and program flexibility. This session offers a unique opportunity to hear directly from senior executives on how they envision the future of healthcare foodservice, and how leaders can stay ahead of trends such as innovation, technology, and flexible program models. Don't miss this engaging discussion, designed to help foodservice leaders adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Awards Presentation

Mainstage | 10:00-10:15 AM

Join us as we honor the Future Horizon's Award and Impact & Innovation Award.

Back to Basics: Operational Success through Process Improvements

Mainstage | 10:15-11:15 AM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Amanda Goldman, MS, RD, FAND (CommonSpirit Health) | Matthew Wilson (CommonSpirit Health)

If there is one constant that we have all learned as healthcare and senior dining foodservice leaders over time, it is that change will continually occur. With frequent change happening, it is sometimes difficult to stay on track with meeting departmental goals. One way to do that is to focus on process improvement and getting back to basics. This educational session effectively combines the leadership component and the management aspect of optimizing your operation, while working towards enhancing the patient experience and achieving financial outcomes. The complementary skill-sets of foodservice & clinical nutrition leaders that create a synergy to support performance enhancement, culture development, along with evidence-based practice



advancement will also be discussed. Join us for a unique presentation full of tools and real-life examples of how removing barriers and challenging the status quo are both keys to ensuring operational success.

State of the Industry: Current and Future Trends, Challenges, and Solutions in Healthcare and Senior Dining *(Lunch Session)*

Mainstage | 12:00-1:00 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Marianne Shick (Datassentials), Krista Zvoch (StoryPoint Group), Joyce Lamilla M.ED, RD/LD, FAND (Ben E. Keith), Barb Minger, MS, RD (Gordon Food Services)

Join Distribution Market Advantage (DMA) for an in-depth exploration of the current and future landscape of healthcare foodservice in this dynamic session, presented in partnership with Datassential. The industry faces numerous challenges across its three primary segments, from evolving consumer demands to rising operational costs. This session will provide operators with key insights and strategies to tackle these issues head-on. Datassential will kick off the session with a presentation on segment-level forecasts and the critical trends shaping the healthcare foodservice industry. Gain a deeper understanding of the drivers behind these shifts and how they'll impact operations in the coming years. Following the presentation, a panel of healthcare foodservice experts will share their solutions, offering actionable strategies to help operators address challenges and leverage distribution resources effectively. Moderated by Datassential, this panel will highlight key insights from regional distributors on how to mitigate emerging risks, streamline operations, and drive success in an increasingly complex industry. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of industry trends, learn from experts, and discover how to apply practical solutions to navigate future challenges.

AFTERNOON CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Revolutionizing Healthcare Foodservice: AI and Robotics from Meal Production to Patient Delivery

Concurrent Session | 1:15-2:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: John Egnor, FCSI (JME Design)

This presentation explores the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics in healthcare foodservice, addressing critical challenges while enhancing patient care and operational efficiency. Attendees will gain insights into current applications, including AI-driven menu personalization, inventory optimization, and robotic systems for meal preparation and delivery. Real-world examples illustrate measurable benefits such as improved patient satisfaction, reduced food waste, and streamlined workflows. The session also ventures into



future concepts, envisioning fully autonomous kitchens, 3D food printing for custom dietary needs, and advanced delivery systems like drones and robotic arms. These innovations promise to redefine how meals are produced and served, enabling faster, safer, and more personalized services. Key takeaways include the strategic advantages of adopting AI and robotics, practical steps for implementation, and overcoming barriers such as initial investment and staff training. Case studies highlight success stories, offering actionable insights for healthcare foodservice leaders. Finally, attendees will take away lessons on how to utilize technology, AI and robotics to reduce labor needs and ease staffing pressures.

Aligning Administrative QAPI Directives with Foodservice's Operational Objectives

Concurrent Session | 1:15-2:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Mary Smith RDN, CD, MBA, MS (Intermountain Health)

In healthcare foodservice, we are often asked to measure performance using methods or measures that were designed for clinical environments. The use of the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) method of continuous improvement in healthcare can be difficult for foodservice to use when healthcare organizations direct the programs through clinical education and nursing service lines. The challenge is finding ways to tie QAPI metrics to the true operational objectives of healthcare foodservice while still working within the frameworks established by hospital administration and nursing leadership. This connection can be made by defining where our foodservice operations and clinical objectives connect, identifying specific opportunities for improvement within our operations, pinpointing measurable metrics that are true representations of our work and its progress, and establishing transparent and collaborative relationships with nursing leaders and hospital administration. This more intentional approach to QAPI offers foodservice the opportunity to use their QAPI program to leverage improvement and gain meaningful and effective support from nursing leadership and hospital administration.

Be Your Own Mentor: Building Connections, Confidence, and Career Growth

Concurrent Session | 1:15-2:15 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Rosemary Aho, CDM, CFPP (Marquette County Medical Care Facility) | Hunter Hying, CDM, CFPP, FMP (Clark Food Service Equipment)

In an era where environmental consciousness and social responsibility are paramount, this session delves into the critical imperative for every food service operator to adopt a robust sustainability plan. Our discussion will explore the intersection of climate change and health emphasizing the role of food service operations in shaping a sustainable future. Attendees will gain insights into the momentum driving sustainability in healthcare and understand the unique



priorities within food service operations. From examining impactful sustainability initiatives to offering practical guidance on how to initiate and integrate sustainable practices, this session provides a comprehensive roadmap for operators to align their strategies with evolving environmental and social expectations. Join us to discover the transformative potential of sustainability planning and learn how it not only benefits the planet but also enhances the overall health and resilience of your food service operation. Attendees will:

- Understanding the Connections between Climate Change and Health Impacts
- Navigating Sustainability Priorities Specific to Food Service Operations
- Developing Strategies for Initiating and Implementing Sustainable Practices

Closing Remarks & Awards Presentation

Mainstage | 2:30-2:45 PM

Join us for our closing words and to honor our presidential service award winners. Then stay for the closing keynote speaker, Dr. Amber Selking.

Closing Keynote: Winning the Mental Game in Leadership & Life

Mainstage | 2:45-3:45 PM | CEUs: est. 1

Speakers: Dr. Amber Selking

Success in leadership and life starts with mastering the mental game. In this engaging session, Dr. Amber Selking will explore how the brain and mind shape our behaviors, decision-making, and leadership effectiveness. Attendees will gain valuable insights into building championship mindsets, managing thoughts effectively, and applying leadership frameworks to enhance both personal and team performance. Walk away with practical tools and strategies to elevate your mindset and lead with greater clarity, confidence, and impact.

Fundraising & Networking Events

4:00-5:00 PM

AHF will be hosting two fundraising activities this year. Attendees can choose to participate in one or both. Both activities will give back to AHF while offering a fun way to network with new friends and colleagues.

AHF Heads or Tails Fundraiser | 4:00-4:30 PM

As part of our mission to support the next generation of operators through our Scholarship Program, AHF is excited to host a fun Heads or Tails game during the final



day of our conference. It's a simple game of chance, where participants buy Mardi Gras bead necklaces and make their guess—heads or tails—after each coin flip. The game continues until there's only one lucky winner, who will walk away with a fantastic prize! Our charismatic Emcee will guide the game, keeping the energy high and excitement building until the final winner is crowned! Mardi Gras beads can be purchased for \$25 for 10 beads or \$50 for 25 beads. Each necklace you purchase gives you one chance to play in the game. The more necklaces you have, the more chances you have to win. Limit to 50 necklaces per person, but feel free to buy beads for others!

AHF Mini-Mardi Gras Float Showdown Fundraiser | 4:30-5:00 PM

Let the good times roll! Join us on Saturday afternoon where we'll be throwing the ultimate Mini-Mardi Gras Float Showdown. Teams will be randomly assigned to a group and challenged to design, decorate, and dazzle with their best bite-sized parade float (all materials and decorations provided)! The fun doesn't stop there. During the closing gala, conference attendees will vote for their favorite float, with the top 3 teams winning team earning prizes and the ultimate prize—bragging rights for the ages! Want in on the action? It's just \$25 per person to participate, and we promise an afternoon full of laughs, friendly competition, and serious Mardi Gras magic. Laissez les bons temps rouler.

Celebrate AHF – Gala & Awards Dinner

Gala Reception & Dinner | 7:00-10:30 PM

Our closing dinner and gala reception. We'll start off by honoring our Lifetime Achievement and Making a Difference Award Winners during dinner. Following that, we'll highlight our 2023 Culinary Competition winners and other AHF leaders. AHFs leaders and Culinary Competition Winners. Of course, we can't forget about our live band, dancing, and drinks. Dinner and drinks will be provided. Cocktail attire is requested.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is AHF's top honor for an operator member. This award is for operators that best exemplify the leadership and spirit and values of our founders, Jacques Bloch and Angelo Gagliano. It honors someone with a lifelong career dedicated to self-operated foodservice, AHF, the healthcare and senior dining industries and volunteerism.

The Making A Difference Award is one of our highest honors. This important distinction is given to an individual in honor and memory of the beloved John Cabot and is the association's top honor for both business partners and media. It is presented to someone who has made significant contributions to AHF in the long tradition of steadfast and selfless industry leadership and volunteerism.