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**Food is Medicine: The fundamental importance of culinary literacy for Sustainable Wellbeing****Deborah D. Kennedy***University of New England, Rouxbe*

**Statement of the Problem:** In most third world cultures deciding what to eat has become a monumental task. While making over 200 food decisions a day, individuals become confused as to how to turn the recommendations from experts “eat more vegetables” into practical skills – what to buy, how to cook/prepare and plan so that healthy food tastes good? Many have stopped cooking or never learned. Most nutrition education for professionals and patients alike is devoid of the culinary sciences. It is essential to bring back culinary skills in order to create a sustainable wellness plan for individuals.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** 40 experts (from Canada, The United States and Europe) in nutrition, dietetics, flavor development, and motivational interviewing, plus 12 chefs came together to create culinary competencies for nutrition recommendations. As a group, they spent 3 years culling over 2500 scientific articles. Findings: The outcome of this work was the development of culinary competencies for nutrition recommendations. Specifically, what does a person need to learn in order to shop, cook, and plan to eat more – fruit, vegetables, whole grains, plant protein and consume less – sodium, sugar, unhealthy sources of protein, dairy, fats and oils, and beverages.

**Conclusion & Significance:** These culinary competencies are integral for creating programs of study in field of Culinary Medicine. It is also the hope that the Food is Medicine movement adopts a culinary skill building foundation. Being able to cook ensures that an individual can honor their palates, wallets and culture by creating food that meets their needs. It makes them less dependent on food made out of the home, which often has a lot of sugar, salt and fat. Bringing culinary skill building into the wide world of food, will support practitioners in their work while empowering individuals to take control of their health.

**Biography**

Deborah Kennedy PhD is the Director of Culinary Medicine at Rouxbe , Adjunct Professor in Applied Nutrition at University of New England, President of The Food Coach AcademyTM, and lead author for The Culinary Medicine Textbook series, which established culinary competencies for following dietary recommendations. She received her PhD in Nutritional Biochemistry from Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition, Science and Policy. Kennedy worked as a chef in Canada, authored three books in pediatric nutrition and feeding, plus five in Culinary Medicine to date; in addition she developed a prescriptive algorithm for dietary changes. She is certified in Value Based Medicine and served as the first Chair for Best Practices in the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative (a Harvard and CIA initiative). She currently serves as a subject matter expert consultant for companies in Food is Medicine and Culinary Medicine for these fast growing fields, which have food at the center.