JOHN WESLEY McWHORTER

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Healthcare executive • Former assistant professor • Chef-dietitian • Behavioral scientist

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Healthcare executive, former tenure-track assistant professor, researcher, and professional chef integrating culinary medicine, food-as-medicine interventions, behavioral science, physical activity, and health equity. Experience spans medical and public health education, funded intervention research, health-system implementation, and cross-disciplinary leadership. Current innovation interests include generative AI for evidence-based education, clinical workflows, intervention development, and data-informed evaluation.

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Vice President, Lifestyle Medicine | Suvida Healthcare, Houston, TX 2023–present

- Lead registered dietitians, physical therapists, Health Education Coordinators, and hospitality and events teams across 14 Texas and Arizona centers serving older adults, with a focus on Hispanic seniors.
- Direct the design, implementation, evaluation, and scaling of lifestyle medicine and food-as-medicine interventions; oversee clinical service performance, patient engagement, functional health initiatives, and health equity priorities.
- Lead applied research, program evaluation, and university partnerships that connect academic methods with implementation in value-based primary care.
- Develop and pilot practical uses of generative AI for nutrition education, clinician-facing resources, prompt workflows, and AI-assisted recipe/content development with professional review.

Director, Lifestyle Medicine | Suvida Healthcare 2022–2023

Affiliated Faculty, Center for Health Equity | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health 2022–present

Assistant Professor (tenure-track) | Dept. of Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health 2020–2022

Assistant Professor; Director, Nutrition Longitudinal Theme | Dept. of Internal Medicine, McGovern Medical School, UTHealth Houston 2020–2022

Director of Culinary Nutrition, Nourish Program | Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, UTHealth Houston 2019–2022

Nutritionist Supervisor, Nourish Program | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health 2017–2019

Teaching Associate | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health 2016–2017

EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health 2020

Health Promotion and Behavioral Science; minor in Epidemiology. Dissertation: Development of a Culinary Nutrition-Based Training of Dietitians and Clinic-Based Nutrition Intervention to Improve Health Outcomes Among Low-Income Minority Patients.

Master of Science, Nutrition and Metabolism | University of Texas Medical Branch; Dietetic Internship 2015

Bachelor of Science, Dietetics | Kansas State University 2014

Associate of Science, Culinary Nutrition | Florida Culinary Institute, West Palm Beach, FL 2007

Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) • Texas Licensed Dietitian (LD) • Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS)

TEACHING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Medical school and graduate courses

Director, Nutrition Longitudinal Theme | McGovern Medical School, Department of Internal Medicine (2020–2022)

Primary instructor, Culinary Medicine (medical student elective) | McGovern Medical School (2017–2022)

Primary instructor, PH 5098 Culinary Medicine | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2017–2022)

Primary instructor, PHWM 1110 Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2022)

Primary instructor, PH 5102 Health Disparities Seminar | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2021)

Primary co-instructor, Culinary Dentistry elective | UTHealth School of Dentistry and School of Public Health (2018–2019)

Co-instructor, Public Health Nutrition and Dentistry | UTHealth School of Dentistry and School of Public Health (2020)

Co-instructor, PH 5098 Garden for Health | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2016–2022)

Guest lecturer, PH 1232 Public Health Nutrition Practice | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2019–2022)

Guest lecturer, Aging and Food Policy | UTHealth Houston School of Public Health (2021)

Co-instructor, Medical Nutrition Therapy Simulation Lab / specialty nutrition | UTHealth School of Public Health (2017)

Teaching associate, Nutrition Research Methods and supervised practice | UTHealth School of Public Health (2016–2017)

Experiential and continuing education

Developed and taught HOPE Clinic SCAN Culinary Medicine training (2021)

Developed and led virtual culinary medicine series for McGovern medical students (2020)

Developed and led culinary medicine continuing education for healthcare professionals (2018)

Developed and taught Mediterranean diet culinary nutrition series (2017–2018)

Lecturer, Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) (2017–2022)

Developed and co-led Young Farmers' Camp and Nourish community cooking education (2017–2022)

Led multidisciplinary Lunch & Learn nutrition education series (2016–2021)

FUNDED RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY PROJECTS

Principal investigator and subcontract principal investigator

• 2020-2023. Health Care Services Corporation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas ($300,000). Nourishing Communities through Culinary Medicine. Role: Principal Investigator.

• 2020-2022. Colgate Palmolive Fellowship in Nutrition, Oral Health/Dental Education Research Grant ($15,000). An Evaluation of Culinary Dentistry: Incorporating Experiential Nutrition into Dental Education. Role: Principal Investigator.

• 2021-2023. Prairie View A&M University, MD-Anderson BeWell Communities ($51,900). Project Green: Health and Wellness Starting from the Roots. Role: Subcontract Principal Investigator.

• 2021-2023. Brighter Bites, MD-Anderson BeWell Communities ($63,901). BeWell Acres Homes. Role: Subcontract Principal Investigator.

Selected collaborative research funding

• 2022-2029. National Institutes of Health ($3,897,669). ENRICH Texas: Evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of a mHealth intervention on cardiovascular health outcomes of mothers and children in home visiting programs. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2022-2027. National Cancer Institute ($2,630,531). TX CORD Virtual: Implementation of a pediatric program adapted for virtual delivery and reaching families via two distinct community channels. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2022-2026. United States Department of Agriculture ($749,999). Houston-area Opportunities for Undergraduate Student Training in Obesity and Nutrition (HOUSTON) Academy 2.0. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2020-2022. Rockefeller Foundation ($473,840). Advancing the Research on Food Prescriptions. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2021-2022. Texas Development Center for AIDS Research ($50,000). Cook As You Are (CAYA 2.0): A Feasibility Study of a Culinary Training Program for Homeless Youth. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2022-2023. UTHealth School of Dentistry and Cizik School of Nursing Seed Funding ($20,000). Exploring the feasibility of using interprofessional education to deliver Nourishing Smiles to underserved adolescents in Houston-area schools. Role: Co-Investigator.

• 2018-2021. Smith Family Foundation ($200,000). A Prescription for Healthy Living: a Qualitative Study. Role: Study Coordinator.

• 2017-2018. Allen Foundation Grant ($150,000). Nourishing the Community: Nutrition Education in Low-Income Communities Utilizing Culinary Arts. Role: Study Coordinator.

Additional study-coordination and co-investigator projects in food prescription, gardening, culinary literacy, and implementation research are documented in the full June 2026 CV.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND APPLIED INNOVATION

- Design and pilot AI-assisted resources and structured prompt workflows for dietitians and interdisciplinary healthcare education, with an emphasis on accuracy, clinical judgment, and responsible use.
- Explore generative AI for recipe development and editing, patient education, curriculum design, synthesis of research evidence, intervention development, and analytic workflows.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Food as medicine and culinary medicine; teaching kitchens; intervention design, implementation and evaluation; food prescription programs and food security; medical and interprofessional nutrition education; physical activity and fall prevention; health equity and value-based care.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Published journal articles, most recent first.

1. Helal Salsa G, Springer AE, Ranjit N, **McWhorter JW**, Reininger BM. The Effect of Virtual Versus In-Person Delivery on Behavior Changes Among Adults Enrolled in the Diabetes Prevention Program in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas: A Secondary Analysis. AJPM Focus. 2026;5(2):100457. PMID: 41694323; PMCID: PMC12906166.
2. Heredia NI, Macias-Navarro L, Guevara D, Sharma S, Chow J, Bentley SS, Chukuigwe O, Pappa A, **McWhorter JW**. Testing of a Culinary Medicine Intervention for Racially/Ethnically Diverse Adults with Type 2 Diabetes. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2025;57(4):263-273. PMID: 39818659.
3. Eisenberg DM, Cole A, Maile EJ, et al, **McWhorter JW**, et al, Edgar L. Proposed Nutrition Competencies for Medical Students and Physician Trainees: A Consensus Statement. JAMA Netw Open. 2024;7(9):e2435425. PMID: 39348126.
4. Macias-Navarro L, **McWhorter JW**, Guevara DC, Bentley SS, Sharma SV, Torres JH, Ai D, Heredia NI. A virtual culinary medicine intervention for ethnically diverse individuals with type 2 diabetes: development of the Nourishing the Community through Culinary Medicine. Front Nutr. 2024;11:1383621. PMID: 39221161; PMCID: PMC11362094.

5. Croxford S, Stirling E, MacLaren J, **McWhorter JW**, Frederick L, Thomas OW. Culinary Medicine or Culinary Nutrition? Defining Terms for Use in Education and Practice. Nutrients. 2024;16(5):603. PMID: 38474731; PMCID: PMC10933959.

6. Ai D, Heredia NI, Cruz V, Guevara DC, Sharma SV, Woods D, Danho M, **McWhorter JW**. Development of a Culinary Medicine Toolkit to Improve Implementation of Virtual Cooking Classes for Low-Income Adults with Type 2 Diabetes. Healthcare (Basel). 2024;12(3):343. PMID: 38338231; PMCID: PMC10855157.

7. Lee JJ, **McWhorter JW**, Bryant G, Zisser H, Eisenberg DM. Standard Patient History Can Be Augmented Using Ethnographic Foodlife Questions. Nutrients. 2023;15(19):4272. PMID: 37836556; PMCID: PMC10574342.

8. Thomas OW, McManus CR, Badaracco C, MacLaren J, Mason A, **McWhorter JW**. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Taking the Lead in Teaching Kitchens. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2023;123(10):1393-1405. PMID: 37453534.

9. Eisenberg DM, Pacheco LS, McClure AC, **McWhorter JW**, Janisch K, Massa J. Perspective: Teaching Kitchens: Conceptual Origins, Applications and Potential for Impact within Food Is Medicine Research. Nutrients. 2023;15(13):2859. PMID: 37447185; PMCID: PMC10343805.

10. Perkison WB, Rodriguez SA, Velasco-Huerta F, et al, **McWhorter JW**, Chenier R, Fernandez ME. Application of implementation mapping to develop strategies for integrating the National Diabetes Prevention Program into primary care clinics. Front Public Health. 2023;11:933253. PMID: 37181720; PMCID: PMC10169622.

11. Ranjit N, Aiyer JN, Toups JD, Liew E, Way K, Brown HS, **McWhorter JW**, Sharma SV. Clinical outcomes of a large-scale, partnership-based regional food prescription program: results of a quasi-experimental study. BMC Res Notes. 2023;16(1):13. PMID: 36765390; PMCID: PMC9921309.

12. McManus CR, Barkoukis HD, Burns AC, Ricelli O, **McWhorter JW**, Harris SR. Preparing Registered Dietitian Nutritionists for Leadership in Culinary Medicine: Opportunities, Barriers, and Alternatives in RDN Education and Training. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2023;123(6):865-870. PMID: 36740186.

13. **McWhorter JW**, Aiyer JN, Ranjit N, Toups J, Liew E, John JC, Sharma SV. Perspectives of Health Care Staff on Predictors of Success in a Food Prescription Program: A Qualitative Study. Prev Chronic Dis. 2023;20:E02. PMID: 36634036; PMCID: PMC9856045.

14. **McWhorter JW**, LaRue DM, Almohamad M, Danho MP, Misra S, Tseng KC, Weston SR, Moore LS, Durand C, Hoelscher DM, Sharma SV. Training of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists to Improve Culinary Skills and Food Literacy. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2022;54(8):784-793. PMID: 35644786.

15. **McWhorter JW**, Danho MP, LaRue DM, Tseng KC, Weston SR, Moore LS, Durand C, Hoelscher DM, Sharma SV. Barriers and Facilitators of Implementing a Clinic-Integrated Food Prescription Plus Culinary Medicine Program in a Low-Income Food Insecure Population: A Qualitative Study. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2022;122(8):1499-1513. PMID: 34839026.

16. Sharma SV, **McWhorter JW**, Chow J, et al, Hoelscher DM, Tseng KC. Impact of a Virtual Culinary Medicine Curriculum on Biometric Outcomes, Dietary Habits, and Related Psychosocial Factors among Patients with Diabetes Participating in a Food Prescription Program. Nutrients. 2021;13(12):4492. PMID: 34960044; PMCID: PMC8707163.

17. Ngo A, Froessl L, **McWhorter JW**, Perkison WB, Katta R. Diabetes Detection and Prevention in Dermatology. Dermatol Pract Concept. 2021;11(4):e2021131. PMID: 34631273; PMCID: PMC8480438.

18. Patnaik A, Tran J, **McWhorter JW**, et al, Monlezun D. Regional variations in medical trainee diet and nutrition counseling competencies: Machine learning-augmented propensity score analysis of a prospective multi-site cohort study. Med Sci Educ. 2020;30(2):911-915. PMID: 34457749; PMCID: PMC8368255.

19. **McWhorter JW**, Raber M, Sharma SV, Moore LS, Hoelscher DM. The Nourish Program: An Innovative Model for Cooking, Gardening, and Clinical Care Skill Enhancement for Dietetics Students. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2019;119(2):199-203. PMID: 29452976.

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

McWhorter JW, Moore LS, Novak JR. How Good Food Works from Seed to Plate. Don Sanders Publishing; 2021. Coauthor and recipe developer. (2022 IBPA cookbook category silver award).

McWhorter JW. "Delivering Oral Presentations." In: Holli B, Beto J, editors. Nutrition Counseling and Education Skills: A Guide for Professionals. 8th ed. Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2021.

SELECTED INVITED PRESENTATIONS, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

- 2026 — Tufts Food Is Medicine National Summit; invited culinary demonstration.
- 2026 — Teaching Kitchen Research Conference; moderator, Teaching Kitchens for Healthy Aging.
- 2025 — Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE); value-based care and dietetics career pathways.
- 2023 — Obesity Medicine Association, Overcoming Obesity; culinary medicine workshop and presentation.
- 2022 — University of South Alabama School of Medicine; Grand Rounds, "Culinary Medicine: The Future of Nutrition."
- 2022 — Today's Dietitian Spring Symposium; "Culinary Medicine: The Future of Dietetics Practice."
- 2022 — Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives; healthcare disparities, racism, and cultural humility.
- 2021 — Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and other professional audiences; nutrition, food culture, and chronic disease prevention.
- 2019 — Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics FNCE; culinary dentistry and nutrition education.
- 2018 — FNCE; "Seed-to-Plate-to-Prevention in Dietetics Education."
- 2018 — Health Meets Food Conference; invited sessions on culinary medicine, food allergies, and geriatrics.
- Ongoing — Faculty and culinary medicine presenter at Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives (multiple years).

SELECTED ABSTRACTS AND RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Heredia NI, Marcelo-Ramirez G, Guevara D, Williams N, Imran A, Chow J, McWhorter JW, Thornton L. Evaluation of a Virtual Culinary Medicine Intervention for Low-Income Adults with Type 2 Diabetes and Elevated BMI in Texas. ISBNPA 2025 Annual Meeting, Auckland, New Zealand. June 12, 2025.

Momin S, Macias-Navarro L, Guevara DC, Hoelscher DM, McWhorter JW, Gandhi PB, Ai D, Heredia NI. Recruitment Strategies for the Teaching Kitchen Multisite Trial. UT Public Health Coalition 2024 Spring Research Symposium, Austin, TX. April 1, 2024.

Heredia NI, Macias-Navarro L, Bentley S, Torres J, Guevara D, Ai D, McWhorter JW. Evaluation of a Bilingual, Culturally-Targeted Virtual Culinary Medicine Intervention for Low-Income Adults with Uncontrolled Diabetes in Texas. SOPHE 2023 Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA. March 22, 2023.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

National Spokesperson (volunteer professional service) | Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics	2020–present
Advisory Council Member | Teaching Kitchen Collaborative	2020–present
Medical Advisory Alliance Committee | Texas Liver Foundation	2021–present
Research and Curriculum Committee Member | Health Meets Food / Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine	2017–2020

Peer reviewer: Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; Appetite; Global Advances in Health and Medicine. Past academic service includes dietetic precepting, faculty advising, and conference abstract review.

Media and public education: Expert commentary on evidence-based nutrition, culinary medicine, health equity, and AI-generated nutrition information in national print, digital, broadcast, and podcast outlets, including The New York Times, GQ, and HuffPost.