

# INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



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**Founder & CEO**



## Where do you see the Food as Medicine industry in its lifecycle, and where is the ceiling?

The Food as Medicine industry is in its early phase of the growth stage. While a majority of the movement's focus has recently been directed towards functional foods, there are many other aspects and nuances associated with this trend, such as medically tailored meals and personalized food prescriptions. This will only continue to grow as we gather more evidence to further our grasp of what contributes to the variance in individual response to food, nutrients and nutrient-environment interactions, along with how social determinants of health interact with these variables.

The barriers to this movement lies within the food and health industries. Ensuring that all persons have access to fresh and affordable

food and establishing a stable distribution is paramount here. Other critical factors include regulatory oversights, policies, racial health disparities, food deserts, high start-up costs, adoption by practitioners, and willingness to reimburse customers and patients by insurers. However, one of the most limiting factors impacting this movement is the reluctance to shift from the reactive health model that we currently have in the United States to a preventative HEALTH care model.

## What is GenoPalate's vision here, and what will the future hold?

Our hope is that in the next few years there will be a larger growth towards equality within nutrition and wellness. [GenoPalate's](#) vision is that everyone should have access to optimized health, and personalized food experience and nutrition is the best path to get there. Building a digital platform which can utilize biological, non-genomic and behavioural data is key in advancing effective individualized, personalized nutrition recommendations.

Furthermore, these recommendations should be supported with coaching, practitioner-patient portals, convenient subscription services, and local food resources. There is also room for growth in this space with third party insurers. Focusing on preventative care that increases an individual's ability to be an informed and empowered patient who is proactively engaging in healthy behaviors can

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also lead to dramatically reduced premiums for life and health insurance plans.

## What is the biggest limiting factor holding back Food as Medicine from reaching its full potential?

Firstly, how the current food industry operates and associated costs. Likewise, truly understanding the interpersonal or cultural effects of food, food preferences, and access to resources, along with are also key factors. Also, understanding consumer behavior and food behavior, which is complex. Health is generally not a driving force in food choices or a person's diet-related behaviors. Thus, if individuals do not like a food there is a high chance that they will not consume it, regardless of the benefits. The industry as a whole needs to address this, incorporate behavior change and assist individuals to adopt healthier eating habits long term.

## Is multi-stakeholder collaboration key in advancing this space?

Absolutely yes. We cannot advance it with singular forces. Food as Medicine is uniquely situated at the conjunction of two tremendous and important industries, the food industry and the health industry. Both have their own laws and regulations, processes and systems, value chains and stakeholders. However, it is now of their high interest to start collaborating and constructing for a common future, as they share the common goal of servicing the same people.

Problems have risen when these two are not servicing the benefits of the same individuals. We should all work towards a healthier society, via a multi-stakeholders' collaboration process of Food as Medicine.

## What are your thoughts regarding the ethical concerns as they relate to the Food As Medicine movement?

Nutrition studies tend to attract a great deal of media attention, and are often relayed to the public as making claims that a specific food or diet is linked to the cause or prevention of certain diseases. Many of these studies then receive a fair share of criticism due to methodologies that may be less accurate or study results taken out of context.

We need to establish a guideline around research ethics and principles of medicine and nutrition interventions here. Some may argue that nutrition research is an extremely complex field of study, influenced by a number

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## What are you most looking forward to at the Food as Medicine Summit?

I was very impressed by the span and the depth of the Food as Medicine Summit's program. I cannot wait to hear the innovators of Food and Health share their current progress, thinking and opinions about possibilities, opportunities and challenges to move Food as Medicine forward for people's benefits. I am looking forward to hearing status and progress reports and key opinions of experts of culinary medicine and medical meals services, health and nutrition law and policy, science-based nutrition solutions, connected and community care and more. It is crucial that key stakeholders share their knowledge and resources and collaborate and build a common future.

of cultural, economic, physical and biological factors, and further complicated by certain assessment methodologies such as patient recalls. However, it does not diminish the need to understand the effects that certain healthy diets have demonstrated in relation to disease management or prevention or the significance of the results.

If we only stick with current biomedical models we risk favoring certain forms of treatment that are rooted in western medicine over other alternative and potentially beneficial and cost-effective approaches including dietary interventions. It is only right that researchers make a concentrated effort to study any promising intervention, especially those related to nutrition.

That being said, it must be noted that research has not yet found the link between any specific dietary intervention and disease cure, thus caution must be made in order to reduce misinformation that undermines the overall movement and sets up unreal and potentially dangerous expectations.

Me and the [GenoPalate](#) team will come to the Food as Medicine Summit to share, educate, learn and lead. I really look forward to an engaging and productive meeting with everyone in May!

*Hear more from Sherry on Day 1 of the Food as Medicine Summit, where she is participating in the panel discussion "Should There Be An Agreed Level of Evidence in Food as Medicine?", and opening Day 2 with a keynote presentation titled "Eat For Your Genes: How Digitalized Nutrigenomics Can Transform Consumers and Patients' Food Behaviors For Sustainable Metabolic Health".*