

# Working Towards an Adequate Supply of RDs



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I encourage all dietitians to read the report written by The Ontario Task Force on Dietetic Education and Practical Training and to consider the critical issues and challenges facing dietetic education and practical training in Ontario.

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Over the past three years, the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) has changed to give health professions regulatory colleges a larger role in health human resources planning. The 2008 amendment to the RHPA included the following new obligation:

2.1 It is the duty of the College to work in consultation with the Minister to ensure, as a matter of public interest, that the people of Ontario have access to adequate numbers of qualified, skilled and competent regulated health professionals.

This recognizes that colleges are uniquely positioned to collect essential planning information, that they shape the scope of practice and activities of health professionals, and that, as gatekeepers into health professions, their entry to practice standards can influence the supply of professionals.

Before the RHPA was amended to include this new obligation, the College had formally adopted an object of supporting the planning of the dietetic workforce in Ontario. This was seen as an important public interest issue due to the chronic shortage of RDs in the province. Since then, we have been working with other leaders towards creating an adequate supply of RDs to serve people in Ontario. Specifically, the College has:

- Annually transferred data to Health Professions Data Base for the purposes of health human resources planning;
  - Proposed amendments to the College's Registration Regulation to accelerate access to the profession, which include extending a temporary certificate of registration to practice under direct supervision if a member has failed the registration exam; and creating a provisional class or registration for members who can practice safely in two of the three core areas of dietetic practice;
  - Provided leadership to the Canadian Partnership on Dietetic Education and Practice to explore a national dietetic workforce data base;
  - Shared data about the Ontario dietetic workforce for research and advocacy; and
  - Provided support to the Internationally-educated Dietitians Pre-Registration Program.
- Supported the work of the Ontario Task Force on Dietetic Education and Practical Training (*Report to Health Force Ontario*, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, June 30, 2011: <http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloadable-Content/Public/Task-Force-on-Dietetic-Education-and-Practical-Tra.aspx>). There are several individuals, groups and organizations that are exploring opportunities to increase the supply of RDs in Ontario, including the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. These two ministries are now considering the report of the Ontario Task Force on Dietetic Education and Practical Training. I would encourage all RDs to read the report and consider the critical issues and challenges facing dietetic education and practical training in Ontario.