



Transparency: Building Trust in Dietetic Profession Regulation

Carole Chatalalsingh, PhD, RD
Practice Advisor & Policy Analyst

carole.chatalalsingh@collegeofdietitians.org

Transparency is a growing value for public institutions like the health regulatory bodies of Ontario. People expect clear and transparent information that they can trust when making decisions about their health providers. This includes having access to all the necessary information needed to make an informed decision when selecting an RD for nutrition services.

Transparency is also a core College value. We have been working hard to make sure that public information about dietitians is helpful and easy to find on the College website. Following an extensive consultation process, the College amended its by-laws in June 2015 to make additional information about RDs publicly available on the Register of Dietitians. Our goal is to provide clear, comprehensive and reliable information that the public can trust to make quality decisions about the RDs they wish to consult.

WHAT CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE COLLEGE BY-LAWS?

The by-law amendments include adding to the Register of Dietitians: a) new information; b) information already in the public domain; and c) information currently collected by the College. The additions include:

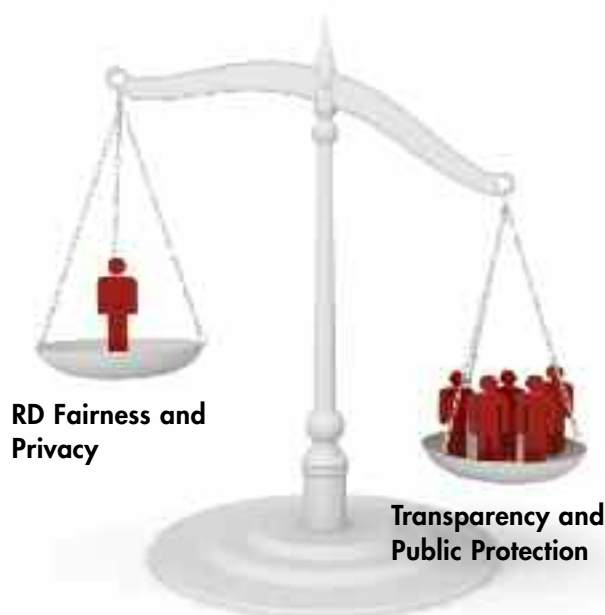
- Federal or provincial charges, or any other offence, as long as these are relevant to the suitability to practice dietetics.
- Bail conditions and conditions of parole.
- Findings of guilt related to an offence or charge.
- Professional licenses or registration in other jurisdictions.
- Discipline findings in other jurisdictions.
- Oral (in person) Cautions (ICRC outcome).
- Specified Continuing Education or Remediation Program (SCERP) Orders (ICRC outcome).

HOW DID THE COLLEGE DECIDE WHICH INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC?

College decisions for making information public about RDs are based on a set of transparency principles shared by all the health colleges of Ontario. The principles were developed by the *Advisory Group for Regulatory Excellence* (AGRE) to help guide Colleges when deciding what information should be made public.

Transparency means revealing all the relevant information about an RD to help an individual make informed decisions. This is paramount in the interest of public protection.

Although fairness to a member is an important consideration, the public interest always comes first when the information disclosed has an impact on dietetic practice. Information about a dietitian is made public when the public interest in the disclosure of the information outweighs fairness to the member.



HOW WILL THE REGISTRAR & ED DETERMINE THE RELEVANCE OF CHARGES AND OFFENCES TO BE POSTED ON THE REGISTER OF DIETITIANS?

A major concern expressed by many members during consultation was about how the Registrar & ED would determine the relevance of charges and offences, or any other information to be posted on the Register of Dietitians. Council addressed this important concern with great thought. After careful deliberation, a transparency policy was approved titled, *Discretion of the Registrar to determine Relevance to Safe and Ethical Dietetic Practice*. It sets out the parameters and criteria to guide the Registrar & ED in determining the relevance of charges and offences. Fundamentally, all information deemed important enough to be posted on the Register of Dietitians must be relevant to safe and ethical dietetic practice.

Recognizing that our legal system is set up around the premise that individuals are innocent until proven guilty, the College will include a caution on the Register of Dietitians that a charge may be withdrawn by the police or an individual may be found not guilty in a court proceeding. In these circumstances, the charges would be removed from the Register. In the Fall résumé, there will be more information about how this policy will be applied by the Registrar & ED.

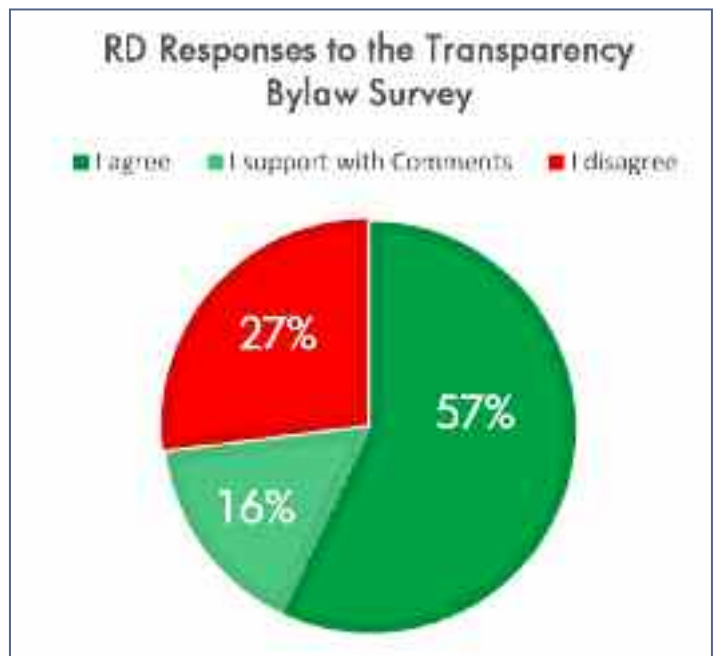
Transparency is an on-going priority for the College. To build and maintain trust in the regulation of the dietetic profession and in the profession itself, all information posted on the Register of Dietitians must be clear, comprehensive and trustworthy. The public expects the College to deliver its mandate of public protection in a way that is transparent and fair to all.

Member Feedback on the By-Law Consultation

In March 2015, we asked for feedback on the proposed amendments to *By-Law 1: General, Section 42*, which sets out the information about a dietitian to be publicly displayed on the Register of Dietitians. Generally, respondents were supportive of the by-law amendments. Of 287 respondents (~8% of College members), 73% agreed with or supported the changes with comments and 27% disagreed with the amendments.

Thank you for participating in the survey.

Your comments were helpful in Council discussions for developing policy.



Any information provided to the public should enhance an individual's ability to make informed decisions and hold the College accountable for effective profession regulation. The information needs to be relevant, credible and accurate.