

If the pilot is successful, the database will give the Ministry and other planners the information they need to track trends such as demographics, fields of practice, migration, tenure in the profession, and retirement patterns. The ministry has acknowledged that this "supply side" information is a starting point. Joined by other Colleges, CDO has emphasized that the "demand side" information is a missing pre-requisite for effective health human resources planning.

I've worked in Ontario's health care system for almost 30 years and I can be a skeptic - health human resources planning for professionals other than physicians and nurses has been talked about for a long time. The College commitment to health human resources planning and the recent initiatives are, however, very encouraging.



MARY LOU GIGNAC
REGISTRAR

Your Participation Counts!

Elections Districts 5 & 6 April 28, 2006

Council & Committee Members help set standards for:

- qualifications
- ethics
- practice
- competence

The profession of dietetics is self-governed through the participation of its members on the *College Council and Committees*. As the governing body of the College, the Council regulates the profession of dietetics. It provides direction and oversight to College programs in keeping with the provisions of the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

RD Dietitian *a protected title*

The Yellow Pages Group Case

Recently, the College learned that Nutritionists were advertising in the *Yellow Pages Directory* under the heading, *Dietitian*. By listing themselves under this heading, these individuals appear to be holding themselves out to be qualified Registered Dietitians and this contravenes the *Dietetics Act, Section 7*.

The College is responsible for protecting the dietitian title. In cases where use of the title appears to be unauthorized, the first step the College takes is to educate and inform the parties about the law and instruct them to stop misusing the "dietitian" title or the misrepresentation of their qualifications. In the *Yellow Pages* case, the Registrar, called the nutritionists involved and sent a letter to the President and Chief Executive Officer of the *Yellow Pages Group*. Here is an excerpt of the letter that was sent to the CEO of the *Yellow Pages Group*:

"It has recently come to our attention that nutritionists who are not Registered Dietitians in Ontario have been listed under the title Dietitians in both hard copies and online versions of the *Yellow Pages Directory* in Ontario. We are asking you for two actions:

1. that there be two distinct headings listed in all your Ontario directories: one for Dietitians (RDs), French Diététistes (Dt.P); and another for Nutritionists.
2. that your sales force be made aware of the protected titles for regulated professions such as Registered Dietitians and advise nutritionists who are not dietitians to advertise under the heading for nutritionists.

In Ontario, Dietitians may legally be listed as Nutritionists but nutritionists may not legally be listed as Dietitians. The use of the dietitian's title is prohibited under the *Dietetics Act (1991)* unless you are a member of the College of Dietitians of Ontario. The Act states:

"Restricted titles

7. (1) No person other than a member shall use the title "dietitian", a variation or abbreviation or an equivalent in another language. 1991, c. 26, s. 7 (1).
Representations of qualification, etc.

(2) No person other than a member shall hold himself or herself out as a person who is qualified to practise in Ontario as a dietitian or in a specialty of dietetics. 1991, c. 26, s. 7 (2).

Definition

(3) In this section, "abbreviation" includes an abbreviation of a variation.

1991, c. 26, s. 7 (3).

Offence

9. Every person who contravenes subsection 7 (1) or (2) is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$5,000 for a first offence and not more than \$10,000 for a subsequent offence. 1991, c. 26, s. 9."

Registered Dietitians are highly educated in the sciences related to foods and human nutrition and are required to continue their professional development to remain current and expand the competencies needed for delivering safe, ethical, and high quality dietetics services. They have met all the requirements established by the College to determine competence to practice.

Other people may provide nutrition advice but, under Ontario law, only Registered Dietitians are held accountable to the *College of Dietitians of Ontario* and the public for their conduct, the quality of their care and the nutrition services that they provide through a comprehensive regulatory system. The public can trust that dietitians are highly qualified.

While we certainly hold individuals responsible for illegally advertising under the heading Dietitians, I am sure your clients would appreciate being made aware of the title reserved only for professional dietitians...."

We have received a response from the *Yellow Pages Group*. Their letter indicates that they have implemented the following (excerpt from letter):

"The heading Dietitians is included in our list of advertising rules for the province of Ontario, last revised and distributed in July, 2005. If you are in agreement, I will replace the existing text with a reproduction of the portions of the Dietetics Act (1991) you have cited in your letter...the updated rules will be distributed to our sales force with the next revision. (excerpt from letter dated January 5, 2006)."

The College will pursue this matter by checking the *Yellow Pages* next year to make sure that only Registered Dietitians appear under the heading of "Dietitians". Experience has shown, however, that once contacted by the College, individuals not qualified to use the title "Dietitian" or holding themselves out to be dietitians illegally have stopped doing so. To date, legal action has never been necessary.

Action is taken on all calls to the College about someone using the title 'dietitian' illegally. Effective enforcement of the law depends on members letting us know of any suspected violations and on the CDO being mindful of opportunities to pursue cases effectively. We are asking you to help us by letting the College know of people who are calling themselves a "Dietitian" and who may not be a member of the College.

20% of Members Attend CDO Workshops

"One of the best College workshops I have attended"

"Enjoyed the workshop...found the model a little confusing."

"The model was a bit abstract and difficult to understand at times. Examples from practice were helpful."

"Professional boundaries questionnaire excellent."

Over 500 dietitians attended the CDO workshop on *Managing Professional Boundaries* at 23 locations across the province. Dietitians from communities as far as Dryden to Cornwall, Windsor and Stratford were able to attend CDO presentations in their area. Each RD received a take-home self-assessment questionnaire and commentary to guide their practice.

The evaluations suggest that 70% found the professional boundaries topic interesting and valuable to their practice. Even more agreed that the College has undertaken activities that they value.

Whereas most participants left with an increased understanding of boundary issues, as many as 60% said that they had learned strategies for managing professional boundaries that they would use in their practice.

Workshop slide presentation available on the College website: See the members' section using your login ID and password.

Feature articles about professional boundary issues were published by the College in *résumé Fall 2004* and *Winter 2005*. See www.cdo.on.ca ▶ Resource Room ▶ Publications.