



College of Dietitians of Ontario
Ordre des diététistes de l'Ontario

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Status Report



COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS OF ONTARIO

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING STATEMENT

The College of Dietitians of Ontario recognizes the important role we play as an employer and as a regulator that serves and protects the public interest. We are committed to informed equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDI-B) action to minimize systemic barriers and to help build a more inclusive and equitable health system for all, including Indigenous peoples, immigrants, refugees, people who are racialized, people with disabilities and the 2SLGBTQIA communities.

Our commitment to informed EDI-B action is a conscious decision to foster respectful partnerships with the public, dietitians, employers, and healthcare providers. It is our shared responsibility to encourage anti-oppressive practices that embrace innovation and recognize the value of diversity to achieve sustainable and meaningful change.

We promise to listen, reflect, learn, and act in collaboration with our Board, staff, dietitians, and the public. We are committed to being transparent about our EDI-B work and actions and why they are important to us. This work is never done. As individuals and as an organization, we commit to being life-long learners and will continue to educate ourselves to better our work within our regulatory mandate and daily practices.

COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS OF ONTARIO

OUR CORE CORPORATE VALUES

Integrity

Collaboration

Accountability

Transparency

Innovation

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the College of Dietitians of Ontario's office is located on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are acknowledging the traditional keepers of these lands as part of a deeper commitment to Ontario's Indigenous communities. As provincial health regulators, we have a large role to play in reconciliation to meet the broader goal of public protection.

10 WAYS CDO IS MAKING EDI-B PROGRESS

- 1 Engaged an expert in the field of equity and anti-racism to conduct training and support strategic planning.
- 2 Fostered awareness and learning of Board and staff members through ongoing training and development.
- 3 Facilitated a regulatory literature review and audit of multiple CDO policy documents.
- 4 Launched an equity and anti-racism survey to registrants and the public.
- 5 Revised several CDO applicant policies to improve equitable access to registration.
- 6 Issued new dietetics practice standards, guidelines and policies informed by EDI-B.
- 7 Implemented EDI-B governance initiatives to Board of Directors deliberations and decision-making.
- 8 Delivered EDI-B workshops and training sessions to all College assessors, focus groups and staff.
- 9 Incorporated an internal Equity Impact Assessment tool to practice policy consultation, design and development.
- 10 Embedded an EDI-B vision statement and corporate values within our culture to continue on our mission.

Introduction

In 2020, the College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO) took its first steps towards informed anti-racism action leading to sustainable and meaningful change in how we carry out our public protection mandate. CDO sought expert consultation to develop an equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDI-B) action plan and retained Dr. Javeed Sukhera, an expert in the field, to conduct training and support strategic planning.

In 2021, CDO leadership worked with Dr. Sukhera to ensure that members of the Board, committees and staff were properly informed on EDI-B issues, to build a foundation for the work ahead — a robust action plan with the following areas of focus:

Area of Focus 1: Capacity Building and Culture Change

CDO began conversations on what EDI-B means for the organization and how this relates to its internal functioning and legislated mandate. Engagement with staff suggested that work was required to build a shared understanding of how EDI-B within the organization can relate to and inform EDI-B related activities outside of the organization.

The recommended actions to build capacity and foster culture change were:

1. Training and coaching for EDI-B champions within CDO.
2. Training and coaching for all CDO assessors.

Area of Focus 2: Policy and Public Relations

Dietitians are a unique profession within healthcare. Before more work could proceed, further engagement with system partners was needed to understand the context of dietitian regulation in Ontario and Canada. The recommended actions to address policy and public relations were:

3. System partner engagement and consultation.
4. Policy audit.

In 2021, CDO also struck an EDI-B Working Group, in collaboration with Dr. Sukhera, to advise the Board on EDI-B initiatives within the College. The key objectives of this ongoing working group are to: one, foster awareness-raising and ongoing learning related to EDI-B for CDO and system partners; two, build capacity within CDO to recognize and address issues related to EDI-B; three, ensure sustainability of EDI-B-related initiatives within CDO; and four, develop and monitor metrics related to EDI-B within CDO.



EDI-B Report

In 2021, Dr. Sukhera delivered [Advancing Equity and Anti-Racism in Dietitian Regulation](#), a report to inform future EDI-B work. The report's findings and recommendations were based on a comprehensive EDI-B literature review of all health professions regulators; focus groups comprising board and staff members, including dietitians; and an audit of 74 CDO policy documents, including personnel, professional standards, assessment, and registration, totaling 328 pages.

Findings

1. Potential areas to advance EDI-B within dietitian regulation are mostly similar to other health professions with a few unique opportunities for CDO.
2. Specific ways that CDO can address equity and antiracism include capacity building within the organization while promoting thought leadership among the profession.
3. The CDO has a strong professional practice infrastructure that can be leveraged to promote education/training opportunities and the development of standards in anti-oppressive dietetic practice.
4. There is currently limited infrastructure, particularly within CDO Board to address equity/antiracism.
5. Existing policy would benefit from a more inclusive approach to policy co-design.

Recommendations

1. Thought Leadership: Promote thought leadership by establishing professional standards related to EDI-B in the profession.
2. Enhance Evaluative Mechanisms: Enhance mechanisms for feedback and appeal for potential registrants.
3. Address the Representation Gap: Enhance representation and diversity within CDO staff and governance.
4. Co-design Policy: Critically appraise existing policies and consider an inclusive approach to policy co-design with racialized and minoritized system partners.
5. Build Capacity: Identify and adequately resource an EDI-B lead within CDO to promote future activities.
6. Enhance and Spread Training: Leverage existing professional practice infrastructure to develop and expand existing training.



EDI-B Survey

In October 2021, the College launched the **CDO Equity and Anti-Racism Survey**, which explored how equity and anti-racism may influence the work of the College of Dietitians of Ontario. The survey was created and administered by Dr. Javeed Sukhera.

CDO survey launched primarily to the public in 2021

In keeping with the College's legislated mandate of public protection, we sought feedback initially from the public as to whether they as individuals had directly or indirectly experienced prejudice or discrimination during their involvement with the College.

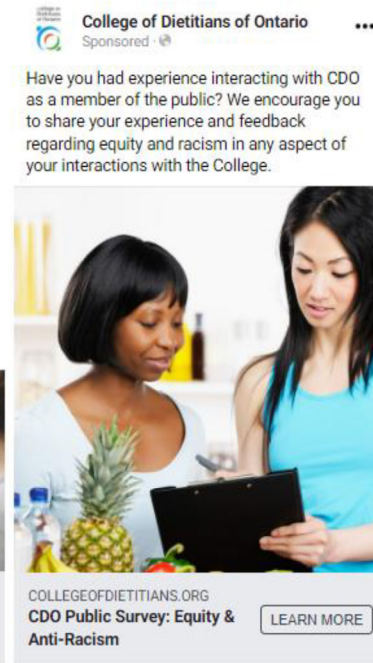
The survey asked questions such as:

- Have you directly experienced prejudice or discrimination during your involvement with the College of Dietitians of Ontario?
- When you directly or indirectly experienced prejudice or discrimination during your involvement with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, what was this prejudice or discrimination based on?
- The College of Dietitians of Ontario performs various functions. In what aspects of a regulator's work did you experience prejudice or discrimination?

CDO survey expanded to registrants in 2022

The survey re-opened for feedback from both the public and registrants in January 2022 until March 2022. To promote the survey, the College launched an extensive online awareness campaign through Facebook and Google digital ads, which generated interest in the survey and public awareness of the College.

The College also promoted the survey to registrants through email, website promotion, and social media. Participation from registrants was significantly higher than public participation, and responses mostly focused on registrant experiences of prejudice and discrimination within the dietetics and broader health-care professions.



EDI-B Survey Results

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) were Registered Dietitians. Only 12 members of the public (5%) chose to respond. Of the 233 respondents overall, most (79%) were born in Canada. The age range was primarily 30–39.

Experience of discrimination

Eight out of 10 respondents (83%) said they had not experienced prejudice or discrimination in regulation, 11% experienced direct prejudice or discrimination, and seven per cent experienced indirect prejudice or discrimination. Of the respondents who experienced discrimination, most identified discrimination related to:

- racial ethnic categories (33%)
- country of origin (14%)
- gender/gender identity (12%)
- sexual orientation/identity (7%)
- language (7%), or religion (7%)

The regulatory areas that these respondents experienced discrimination were in:

- Licensure and registration processes (39%)
- Governance (13%)
- Complaints and Investigations (5%)
- Other (42%)

Minoritized respondents were most likely to identify racial/ethnic discrimination. In the subset of respondents who identified as minoritized, 20% experience direct discrimination, 13% indirect, and 69% had not experienced prejudice or discrimination.

Most discrimination was recent. Discrimination experience mostly took place within the past 10 years, with 26% of respondents indicating 6–10 years, 29% indicating 2–5 years, and 39% in the past year.

A TIMELINE OF KEY CDO EDI-B INITIATIVES

March 2021

EDI-B Working Group comprising Board and staff members established to advise CDO on its role in overseeing and monitoring the response to and implementation of EDI-B initiatives.

November 2021

Dr. Sukhera delivers EDI-B report to the College, which includes a literature search, environmental scan, internal and external engagement, and a policy audit.

January 2022

CDO creates staff position to lead EDI-B process and policy initiatives.

March 2022

The Board amends the Governance Committee's Terms of Reference to include EDI-B responsibilities related to supporting CDO's EDI-B strategy.

September 2022

The Board approves an EDI-B vision statement and revised corporate values.

December 2022

The Board approves a Competency and Attribute Framework for directors that identifies EDI-B as a core competency.

Want to learn more? Visit:
collegeofdietitians.org/EDI-B

Registrants expressed their thoughts on discriminatory practices

Some respondents reported barriers to licensure. Some racialized respondents felt they struggled to feel welcome and belonging in the profession because of their identity. Others cited high fees as a discriminatory practice for early career professionals.

Additional examples related to what registrants perceive as discriminatory standards that devalue international training. Another area of concern was the examination. Respondents noted that the exam was not inclusive for neurodiverse candidates.

Some registrants questioned practice conventions. Participants raised concerns with the member practice audit process. One participant noted that the process was “difficult” for people with certain types of disability. Another noted that the writing in the jurisprudence handbook (which is no longer in publication) could be difficult for some to understand. Similar concerns were also raised about quality assessment practices which could be more reflective of diverse practice settings.

More work is necessary with cultural food practices. Participants indicated that there was indirect discrimination related to Euro-centric norms regarding dietetic practices in Ontario and how cultural food practices were perceived in relation to Western diets. For example, cultural food practices in non-European settings were poorly integrated into how dietetic practice is understood and assessed by regulators.

Notes

Despite the survey’s significant learnings, it is important to note that anti-Indigenous racism and an anti-colonial lens was not applied. There are several important issues related to Indigenous self-governance, data, and a post-colonial approach to health professions regulation that was outside the scope of the survey.

Also, focus group and survey engagement was limited in number. Despite significant outreach efforts, only five per cent of College registrants and very few members of the public chose to respond to the survey. Further opportunities for robust engagement would strengthen the recommendations.

CDO continues to welcome feedback on the survey. Email EDI@collegeofdietitians.org.

REGISTRATION POLICY REVISIONS INFORMED BY EDI-B

Policy 3-30: Currency for Applicants
Revised to recognize graduate studies to demonstrate currency of dietetic knowledge, skills, and competence.

Policy 4-50: Language Proficiency
Policy 6-10: Eligibility for Prior Learning and Recognition
Both revised to provide more options for applicants to demonstrate English and French language proficiency and recognize the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s current approved language tests for skilled immigrants.

Policy 5-30: Upgrading After Second Failure of the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination
Revised to provide an individualized and empathetic approach to determine an applicant’s learning and upgrading needs prior to attempting the CDRE for a final time.

Policy 6-10: Eligibility for Prior Learning and Recognition
Revised to extend the use of the KCAT to permit internationally trained applicants who have completed degrees reasonably related to dietetics, but who have not yet completed any formal practical training.

Want to learn more? Visit:
collegeofdietitians.org/EDI-B

Survey Recommendations

Dr. Sukhera delivered his report to the College in 2022 on findings and recommendations from the survey. When asked about areas in which the College could improve in terms of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, recommendations from respondents fell into the following themes:

1. CDO can be an agent of change.

Participants indicated that CDO has an important role as an influencer and thought leader in the province of Ontario. They felt that CDO should leverage its position and privilege to help promote change.

First, acknowledgment of how the organization and regulators have contributed to harm, then commit to addressing the problem through engagement and structural change. They also noted that taking an intersectional approach to equity and justice work is important, while foregrounding anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

2. CDO can increase transparency and change policy.

- Transparency: Commitment to change involves improving transparency and reporting.
- Policy Change: Participants noted that CDO could play a role in promoting a policy for prevention and intervention related to prejudice and discrimination. Another policy suggestion was an amendment to the code of ethics with more details on racism/prejudice, and efforts to improve feedback and evaluation of existing processes.
- Addressing public discrimination: Participants noted that the CDO should play a role in ensuring registrants are able to practice in a culturally safe way.

3. CDO can reduce barriers to becoming a dietitian.

4. CDO can improve representation and training in the profession.

- Engage registrants who identify as racialized in college activities and ensure they have meaningful and equitable compensation for EDI-B work.
- Advocate for improvements in training and education.
- Upstream work to recruit more diverse students.

PRACTICE POLICY WRITING INFORMED BY EDI-B

CDO is currently using an interim Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) tool to inform policy development as we work with the Health Profession Regulators of Ontario on a shared EIA tool.

Determining Currency Hours in Dietetic Practice

More flexibility for equity-deserving groups to meet the currency hours requirement and less challenging for dietitians to continue redeployed work to reduce economic burdens.

Social Media Standards and Practice Guidelines for Dietitians in Ontario

Information added related to prejudice and discrimination, reminding dietitians about practising in a culturally safe manner and encouraging accessibility standards for EDI-B.

Virtual Care Standards and Practice Guidelines for Dietitians in Ontario

Consultation survey respondents were asked if they foresaw any positive or negative impacts on equity-deserving groups or client populations as a result of the standard and practice guidelines.

Want to learn more? Visit:
collegeofdietitians.org/EDI-B

Moving Forward

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

Since we took our first steps back in 2020, during a time of global reckoning for the systemic racism and inequalities endured by equity-deserving groups, it has been an extraordinary journey for EDI-B at the College of Dietitians of Ontario.

We made EDI-B a priority for our organization and have embedded equity and anti-racism in every facet of our culture. This commitment is explicit in our EDI-B vision statement, which reads in part:

Our commitment to informed EDI-B action is a conscious decision to foster respectful partnerships with the public, dietitians, employers, and healthcare providers. It is our shared responsibility to encourage anti-oppressive practices that embrace innovation and recognize the value of diversity to achieve sustainable and meaningful change.

We listened. We learned. And we achieved more than we thought possible, even amidst the challenges of a global pandemic and the complexities of the virtual world in which we were working.

A long road ahead. Much work to be done.

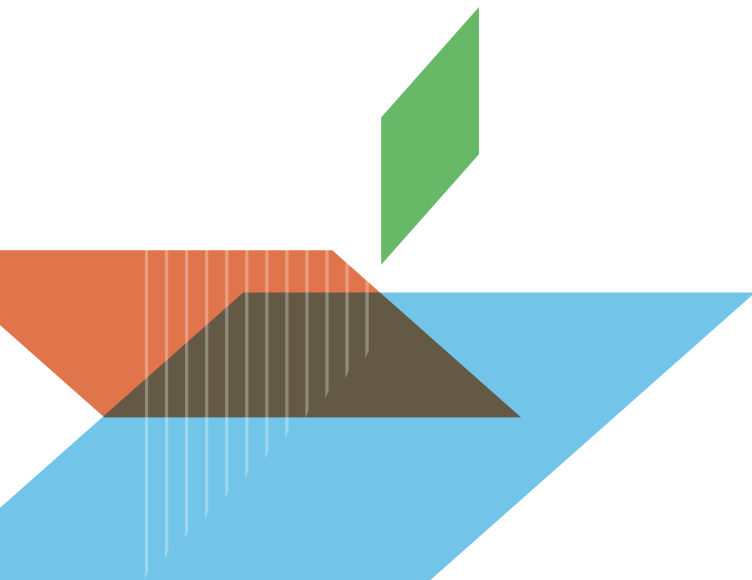
CDO is committed to ensuring EDI-B is reflected in our policies, processes, and our engagement with system partners. We have embedded EDI-B objectives within our strategic plan and will continue to operationalize EDI-B in College processes, policies and decision making.






We are developing a plan for the collection of EDI-B demographic data of applicants and registrants. We are collaborating with other health profession regulators on the adoption of an Equity Impact Assessment Framework. And we will continue to update College policies and processes based on feedback from the Advancing Equity and Anti-Racism in Dietitian Regulation report and Global Diversity Benchmarks.

In addition to reporting on our EDI-B progress to the Ministry of Health through the College Performance Measurement Framework, we pledge to inform all system partners, including registrants and the public, of our EDI-B work. Becoming a safer, more equitable and inclusive organization is a continuous journey and commitment for CDO.

We could not have come this far without the support of our Board of Directors, the EDI-B Working Group, College staff, the expertise of thought leaders and, most importantly, the dietitians of Ontario.

Feedback or questions? EDI@collegeofdietitians.org Want to learn more? collegeofdietitians.org/EDI-B



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