



Strategic Plan 2016-2020

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Introduction

The College of Dietitians of Ontario (College) regulates the profession of dietetics in Ontario under the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Dietetics Act. The College sets and enforces standards for safe, ethical and competent dietetic practice in the province for over 3800 Registered Dietitians (RDs) and assists people in Ontario with information about how to access services. Members of the public can bring concerns about a Registered Dietitian directly to the College.

The College engaged The Accountability Group in early 2015 to renew and lead our strategic planning process. A Strategic Planning Committee was established to oversee and support the project.

Our planning process included reflection by the College Council and Staff regarding developments in the practice of the dietetics profession and changes and trends in health care, technology, demographics, and society. Our environmental scan expanded to include a series of external interviews and an online survey to members and the public. From our stakeholders, we learned that the College has already distinguished itself in our commitment to accountable regulation, excellence, collaboration, and a forward-looking orientation.

Council then reviewed and refreshed the current Mission, Vision, Values, End Goals and Objectives to fulfill the mandate and vision of the College. The Council gained renewed energy regarding certain foundational End Goals and highlighted other aspects for dedicated attention. We recommitted to a robust regulatory framework, supporting the continuing competence of our members, collaboration, and ensuring an effective organization while also recognizing the opportunities for stronger communications with our stakeholders.

The plan is intended to:

- guide the efforts of Council, Committees and Staff
- focus our energy and help us allocate resources into areas that the Council believes are necessary to fulfill our mission over the next few years
- provide the public, our members and stakeholders with insight regarding how the College intends to fulfill its mission and vision.

Mission, Vision and Values

The College Mission

A mission is a statement of organizational purpose. College's mission is:

The College of Dietitians of Ontario is dedicated to public protection.
We regulate and support Registered Dietitians for the enhancement of safe, ethical and competent nutrition services in diverse practice environments.

The College Vision

A vision describes what our organization will look like if it succeeds in achieving its goals and its full potential. College's vision is:

People of Ontario can be confident that the College demonstrates regulatory excellence in the public interest.

College Values

The Council has set out these values to guide our behaviour and decision-making. We will uphold these core values in our actions and decisions:

- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Innovation

End Goals

End Goals define what our organization must accomplish, taking into account all of our obligations. These leadership priorities are outcome statements within our Ends policy. They prescribe the results that the Council has set out for the CDO to achieve over the next four years:

Goal 1:
A Robust
Regulatory
Framework for
the Quality and
Safety of
Dietetic
Practice

Goal 2:
Competent
Members
Engaged in
Effective
Informed
Practice

Goal 3:
Stakeholders
Recognize CDO
as an
Accountable
Regulator for
Public Protection

Goal 4: A Collaborative Partner

Goal 5: An Effective Organization with Optimal Use of
Resources

End Goals and Objectives

END GOAL 1: A Robust Regulatory Framework for the Quality and Safety of Dietetic Practice

An excellent regulator strives to serve the public interest first and foremost. The College meets its obligations for public protection with an effective framework of regulatory standards, requirements for registration, the maintenance of continuing competence, and procedures of investigation and discipline. Given the developing context of the practice of dietetics in today's health care and consumer environment, we will continue to examine and evolve our framework.

Objectives

- 1.1 Monitor practice data related to high-risk areas, and address as appropriate.
- 1.2 Ensure non-traditional pathways to registration are fair to applicants, while maintaining high quality standards.
- 1.3 Identify and respond to areas beyond entry-to-practice as appropriate.
- 1.4 Ensure applicability of our standards to diverse and emerging practice settings.

END GOAL 2: Competent Members Engaged in Effective Informed Practice

The College ensures that, before they can practise or use the professional title, individuals meet practical training and educational standards.

To support continued competence throughout their careers, College programs help members improve their knowledge and skills so they will practice competently, safely and ethically in diverse settings and roles.

As the College responds to changing practice issues, we will support members' learning – striving to be relevant and accessible to all members. The College recognizes that Registered Dietitians must be equipped to contribute to health promotion and an effective healthcare system. They may also be part of and lead interprofessional teams.

Objectives

- 2.1 Obtain regular feedback from members regarding issues in their practice environments for which College guidance or policies may be required.
- 2.2 Provide specific and relevant support to Registered Dietitians in all areas of dietetic practice.
- 2.3 Ensure accessibility of policies and processes to facilitate effective and timely enforcement of/compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- 2.4 Engage Registered Dietitians in continuous quality improvement programs that are relevant to their variable practice settings and different learning styles.

END GOAL 3: Stakeholders Recognize the College as an Accountable Regulator for Public Protection

The public needs access to appropriate information in order to trust that the system of professional self-regulation works effectively. In keeping with our mandate of public protection, the College will be innovative and proactive to support all stakeholders' understanding of our role. We will enhance the accessibility of public information and increase the College's visibility over the next four years.

Objectives

- 3.1 Continue to educate the public and other stakeholders regarding how the College fulfills its public protection mandate.
- 3.2 Continue to educate our members regarding the College's services and activities, and how they support public protection.
- 3.3 Explore innovative media and communications to connect with the College's stakeholders.
- 3.4 Increase the level of member engagement in the work of the College.

END GOAL 4: A Collaborative Partner

The College collaborates with government ministries and other organizations as needed in order to fulfil its mandate. We will continue to review and enhance these collaborations.

Objectives

- 4.1 Maintain and enhance our relationship with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
- 4.2 Contribute to or lead, as appropriate, collaborations with our partner organizations including:
 - Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies
 - Partnership for Dietetics Education and Practice (PDEP)
 - Dietitians of Canada
 - Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario
 - Dietetics Education Leadership Forum (DELFO)
 - Non-Health Regulatory Colleges
 - Government ministries
 - Other organizations with shared interests
- 4.3 Recognize, develop and promote new opportunities for collaborative, productive relationships to advance our mandate.

END GOAL 5: An Effective Organization with Optimal Use of Resources

The College has built a strong governance and operational foundation. We will continue to monitor, evaluate and improve our organization. Over the next four years, we will further optimize our people, use of funds, and processes to maintain our capacity to meet our End Goals.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Ensure excellent organizational governance of the College.
- 5.2 Ensure Council, Committees and Staff have sufficient capacity to deliver College goals.
- 5.3 Ensure responsible stewardship of financial resources.
- 5.4 Leverage technology to support delivery and evaluation of programs and communication with stakeholders.
- 5.5 Ensure ongoing College work is based on relevant information and evidence.

Conclusion

In this Strategic Plan, the Council has renewed the College's Mission, Vision and Values and developed End Goals to focus on the priorities that will help us fulfill our mandate of public protection.

This Plan reflects Council's confidence about the future of dietetics in Ontario and the important role of regulation in this dynamic environment. We will continue to enhance the regulatory framework of dietetics in the province, and engage our members to help them practise safely, competently and ethically.

Mindful of the elevated public expectations of regulatory bodies to act in the public interest, we will communicate more clearly with the public and other stakeholders to increase their knowledge of the work we do and invite their input. We also recognize that intentional strategic collaborations advance our mandate and we commit in this Plan to continue to strengthen our relationships to achieve our vision.

The work of the College would not be possible without the dedication of staff, Council, and Committee members.

The Council thanks all contributors to this Plan – internal and external – and looks forward to working with our valued stakeholders so that the people of Ontario can be confident that the College demonstrates regulatory excellence in the public interest.

APPENDIX - Understanding the Wider Landscape

The purpose of our Environmental Scan was to create a fresh, concise, yet comprehensive view of the College's operating environment. We explored trends in society, changes in the regulation of health professionals, health care, patient/consumer demographics, College member profiles, and shifts and challenges in members' practice environments.

In some instances, these were defined as critical issues on which the College must contribute guidance.

We thank the following contributors to the scanning process:

- Judy Paisley, RD, Ryerson University
- Katherine Vandebussche, RD, Dietetics Education Leadership Forum of Ontario & Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- Corinne Eisenbraun, RD, Partnership for Dietetics Education and Practice
- Jennifer Garus, Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies
- Linda Dietrich, RD, Dietitians of Canada
- Lesia Kicak, RD, Hamilton Health Sciences Centre
- Cathy Paroschy Harris, RD, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
- Marshall Moleschi, Ontario College of Pharmacists
- Sue Behari McGinty, RD, Loblaws
- Anne Birks, RD, Manager, Nutrition Promotion, Toronto Public Health, and her colleagues.

In addition, the scan included feedback from sessions with the College's staff and feedback received from over 450 Registered Dietitians and 29 other stakeholders (clients, public, students and employers) through an online survey.

To better understand the Plan, here are some of the following key trends that we heard:

- **Diversity in Dietetics Practice and Practice Settings:**
The workplace for dietitians has become more diversified in recent years. New roles for dietitians are opening up and growing quickly, such as supermarket dietitians and contributors to research. There are more Registered Dietitians in private practice and new opportunities for them to earn income related to the sale of nutritional products and aids.

Different workplaces give rise to RD specializations – in eating disorders, mental health, elder care, sports nutrition, general wellness, food services, and so on. Some workplaces offer new challenges and may not be conducive to traditional practice requirements. In some settings, a dietitian may practice virtually or not have the immediate mentorship and support of senior practitioners. Home care environments offer unique challenges. Registered Dietitians in these settings are seeing patients who have more serious health issues than dietitians have traditionally encountered.
- **Beyond Entry to Practice**
Upon entry to practice, dietitians have a foundational understanding of their field. However, some of the roles within the RDs scope require a combination of additional training and experience beyond entry level. Examples include parenteral feeding, malnutrition screening and the treatment of dysphagia. Some interviewees noted these are areas of risk, especially for new practitioners.

In addition, there is new research on screening and malnutrition. There will be more screening of people coming into acute care. This may involve new skills of physical examination for Registered Dietitians.

- **Education and Internship:**

The traditional process for entry into the profession has been an education program followed by a hospital internship. Funding for internship programs within hospitals is being reduced, making it more difficult for new entrants to get the experience they need. Schools and dietitians have sought other means of imparting/gaining competencies. Simulation is being increasingly incorporated into the academic programs and internships. Simulation is a technique to replace or amplify real-patient exposure with guided experiences providing the opportunity for learning that is both immersive and experiential. It may not always be able to incorporate all aspects of real-life especially in higher-risk activities such as parenteral feeding and the treatment of dysphagia.

Another source of new dietitians is, of course, immigration. There is a need for fair and accessible approaches for assessment of the credentials of foreign-trained professionals and ways for them to bridge knowledge and skill gaps.

- **Higher-Acuity Patients:**

The acuity of patients that dietitians serve is increasing. Contributing to this trend is the combination of an aging population and the continuing shift of more resources to home and community care. Higher-acuity patients with complex needs are everywhere – including hospitals, long term care, and the community.

- **Greater Demands, Constrained Resources:**

Ontario's healthcare budget has been strained in recent years and will likely continue to be tight. Dietitians in some healthcare settings may be fewer in number.

- **Preventative Care:**

There is a move to shift spending to preventative care. Since diet is a significant factor in preventative care, Registered Dietitians will likely be key participants.

- **Informed Consumers:**

The ubiquity of web-based nutrition information means that dietitians need to be able to research and respond to information that consumers gain from a variety of sources.

- **Technology and Communications:**

New forms of communication such as social media and telemedicine are affecting practice, record-keeping and transparency.

The Environmental Scan was the backdrop of Council's planning sessions and provided key contextual elements for Council direction-setting.