

Strengthening the College Regulatory Framework



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The College of Dietitians of Ontario exists to regulate and support all Registered Dietitians in the interest of the public of Ontario.

We are dedicated to the ongoing enhancement of safe, ethical and competent nutrition services provided by Registered Dietitians in their changing practice environments.

In life, we all need signposts to keep on course. Organizations are no different and the College is no exception. The College is at the end of a strategic planning cycle and it is time to assess our accomplishments to determine if we have met our goals. The College's *Strategic Plan 2011-2015* set out five goals:

- Goal 1:** An Effective Regulatory Framework for the Quality & Safety of the Dietetic Practice
- Goal 2:** Competent Members who are Compliant with CDO Standards
- Goal 3:** Informed and knowledgeable Registered Dietitians Engaged in Effective Practice in their Environments
- Goal 4:** Support of the Attainment of an Adequate Supply of RDs
- Goal 5:** An Effective Organization with Optimal Use of Resources

Over the term of the plan, the College has tracked activities and metrics related to each goal. Following are some of the achievements that I would like to highlight to express our commitment to effective regulation in the public interest.

USING THE PRINCIPLE OF RISK TO FOCUS REGULATORY RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION

Extensive work was done to identify risk and develop a risk framework for use in dietetic practice. This work highlighted the many personal, interprofessional and environmental factors that affect safety of dietetic practice in changing practice environments. The identification of specific risks set a new agenda for developing standards and resources to support RDs. Going forward, risk will be tracked through the *Self-Directed Learning Tool* and RDs will be asked to consider risk in setting their professional learning goals.

FRAMEWORK OF STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The new *Framework for Standards of Professional Practice* (2013) defines a professional standard in relation to minimum performance expectations and responsibilities for safe, ethical and competent client-centred services. It also establishes the criteria and the process for developing standards to make sure College resources are sharply focused on minimizing risk of harm to the public and supporting RDs to practice safely. The following new standards and guides were also published: *Standard of Practice: Collecting Blood Samples Through Skin Pricking* (2012) to address a new authority for RDs; the *Framework for Managing Risks in Dietetics*; an updated *Record Keeping Guidelines for Registered Dietitians in Ontario* (2014); and *Guidelines for Supervising Learners*.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REGISTRATION PROGRAMS REFINE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Through its competence assessment and other learning tools, the Quality Assurance Program assures the public and other stakeholders that Registered Dietitians in Ontario practice safely, competently and ethically. By moving to a 2-step assessment, the *Peer and*

Practice Assessment (PPA) was expanded to assess more RDs than ever before. Feedback about RDs from clients and colleagues is used to determine which RDs need to advance to a more intensive practice assessment and chart audit. A very significant new component to the QA program is the assessment requirement for RDs who practiced fewer than 500 hours in the preceding three years. This has resulted in some RDs choosing to enter into an undertaking with the College not to practice until they have been assessed and completed the professional development directed by the College. Other RDs have successfully demonstrated competence to practice dietetics.

In the Registration Program, new competence assessment policies and procedures were implemented for two types of applicants: those who completed their education but have not practiced in the three years prior to their application, and applicants who undertook practical education outside of accredited programs. The College also introduced supervised practice conditions for temporary certificate holders who fail the national registration exam. The supervision enables them to continue practising to develop their competence while ensuring the public is protected.

The College secured close to \$700,000 from the provincial Ministry of Citizenship Immigration and International Trade for the development and implementation of new assessment tools for internationally educated dietitians. The work is now underway. This is an example of creating a more effective regulatory framework as well as reducing barriers to registration thereby contributing to a better supply of RDs to serve the people of Ontario.

INFORMED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE REGISTERED DIETITIANS

Having informed and knowledgeable RDs is a strategic goal that speaks to our regulatory philosophy of supporting RDs to be competent, safe and ethical in their practice. As technology has evolved in the last few years, we have worked hard to adopt the new electronic and web-based technologies to facilitate RD access to important College information and resources, to reach every generation of RD, and cover all learning styles. We have restructured the resources on the website and

implemented a robust search feature to make it more user friendly. And, online learning modules, blogs, videos and twitter have been introduced in our arsenal of information and communication tools to reach more people.

The Practice Advisory Service was strengthened by adding another advisor for more effective RD support and increased work with interns to give them a better understanding of jurisprudence and College resources as they enter the profession. The quality assurance tools – *Jurisprudence Knowledge Assessment Tool*, the SDL Tool and PPA – are continuously updated to address all areas of practice and to cover relevant current issues, such as, interprofessional collaboration in client-centre care and risk of harm.

EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

The College is committed to strengthening its people, processes and technologies. External specialists were invited to review governance practices to ensure that the College uses best practices for oversight, accountability and transparency. A key result of this review was the College's new definition of public interest which articulates our commitment to serving people in Ontario and expresses how our decision making is rooted in public values and collaborative processes. New transparency provisions were also implemented to open more College documents to the public. A decision to incorporate a regulatory risk management framework into governance processes assures that the right things will be measured for responsible oversight and continuous improvement.

As a Council, committee and staff, we worked hard and are very proud of our accomplishments. Thank you to all the public appointees and dietitians who participated in doing the work on Council, committees and working groups. Thank you to everyone who gave feedback through focus groups and surveys and have been part of our growth and development.

The College is preparing for the next strategic planning phase. We will reach out to key stakeholders including RDs in every area of practice to inform our next goals. We encourage all members to participate as we move forward together to strengthen dietetic practice in Ontario in the interest of the public.