



Continued Competence: A View From The Other Side



Erin Woodbeck, RD
President

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.

Supporting and monitoring competence throughout a Registered Dietitian's career is a core component of the College's mission. It is essential in meeting the organizational vision of ensuring that the people of Ontario can be confident that the College demonstrates regulatory excellence in the public interest. For the past three years, I have been a member of the Quality Assurance Committee. My participation in this committee has given me greater insight and appreciation for the importance of ensuring continued competence as a practising RD. The Quality Assurance Program tools implemented by the College have evolved considerably over the span of my career. My involvement in the Quality Assurance Committee has significantly transformed my perspective towards these tools and processes.

In particular, I have gained an appreciation for the value of the *Self-Directed Learning Tool* (SDL Tool). I recognize that this statement may lead to a collective groan from RDs but I must admit that the activity of critiquing the SDL Tool submissions of my peers has been particularly helpful in enhancing my own skills in developing learning, nutrition care, and career-related goals. Reflecting upon my practice and relating my annual self-directed learning goals to the performance indicators and associated competencies identified within this tool has helped focus my learning plans. The process of reviewing SDL Tools has also helped me to employ clear and concise language to convey desired learning outcomes that are relevant, meaningful and tangible.

The Quality Assurance Committee is also involved in the development, evaluation and revision of many of the competency assessment tools. The work of the Committee frequently includes spirited discussion about the strengths and limitations of the tools and processes themselves. This exposure has helped me recognize the thoughtfulness and skill which is applied when evaluating and revising competency activities. I also appreciate that assessing competency is a challenging task, and I do respect that there is some flexibility incorporated into the College's competency assessment processes to allow for applicability to a wide variety of practice areas.

Another interesting component of continued competence that has frequently arisen is that of advanced level versus entry level practice skills. Although we currently do not have criteria to designate advanced level competence, it is evident that the College and our members alike share the common goals of advancing dietetic knowledge and skills to support professional growth. It is this shared value in conjunction with formalized regular competency related activities that I believe imparts authenticity and integrity to the designation of "RD".

