



## Dietitian – A Protected Title

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"Dietitian" and "Registered Dietitian" are the protected titles for nutrition professionals in Ontario. The College is engaged in educating the public about RDs. The campaign focuses on the role of the College and the benefits of choosing a regulated nutrition professional.

As a regulatory body, the College is responsible to ensure that only members of the College use the title of dietitian in the province of Ontario. The College regularly responds to reports of RD title abuse received from RDs and the public. When a title protection report is received, College staff investigate and contact the person involved and/or their employer to provide education about the protected title of dietitian in Ontario and the potential penalty for misuse of the title. The College monitors the situation to ensure that corrective action is taken. This approach has been successful.

We wish to thank the Registered Dietitians who have brought to our attention individuals and organizations inappropriately using the dietitian title in Ontario. The following are some examples of the title protection cases that the College has addressed.

### **DIETITIAN REGISTERED IN THE USA USING THE TITLE OF DIETITIAN IN ONTARIO**

The College received a report about a consultant who was registered as a dietitian in the USA and using the RD title in Ontario. When questioned about her registration in Ontario, the consultant said that she did not want to pay membership fees in both Canada and the US. The College wrote a letter to the consultant and asked her to discontinue using the RD title in Ontario, unless she registered with the College.

The College appreciates that some people may maintain registration in other jurisdictions. The law in Ontario, however, states that only individuals registered with the College may use the title of dietitian in Ontario.

The consultant and their employer assured the College that they would no longer refer to the consultant as a dietitian.

### **MEDICAL CLINIC ADVERTISING THE SERVICES OF AN RD**

The College received a complaint about a surgical clinic offering surgery and advertising the services of a dietitian. The employee in question was not a Registered Dietitian, but rather a Registered Nutrition Consulting Professional (RNCP). The College contacted both the manager of the surgical clinic and the nutritionist. Both parties were advised about the law, the qualifications required for becoming registered with the College, and the penalties for misuse of the restricted title. They were asked to stop advertising the RNCP as a dietitian. The College received assurances from both the employer and the nutritionist that they will no longer refer to the nutritionist as a dietitian and the website was corrected.

### **ONLINE JOB APPLICATION**

An employer contacted the College after receiving an application from a nutritionist for a position as a Registered Dietitian. The nutritionist did not use the title of dietitian on his resume or cover letter, but did answer "Yes" when the application form asked if he was a "member in good standing with the College of Dietitians of Ontario".

The College corresponded with the nutritionist to educate him about the laws in Ontario and the potential penalties. He assured the College that this was done in error and that he would not represent himself as a member of the College in the future.

### RNCP ADVERTISING UNDER HEADING OF DIETITIAN IN THE YELLOW PAGES

The College was advised about a nutritionist whose consulting business appeared in the Yellow Pages under the heading of "Dietitian". An investigation revealed that her while website did not use the title of dietitian, the search results for "dietitians" in Ontario included her business. The nutritionist was contacted by the College, and asked to stop allowing herself to be referred to as a dietitian. Her response was that she does not use the title of dietitian and that she understands the difference between a nutritionist and a dietitian. She felt that since the error was made by Yellow Pages, the College should be pursuing the matter with them, and not her.

While the College recognized that she had not asked to have her business listed under the dietitian heading, we consider it an individual's responsibility to ensure that their listing is appropriate. The nutritionist was also advised that the College has made attempts in the past to educate the

Yellow Pages staff, and that unfortunately, our experience has been that they respond best to their customers.

### REFERENCE TO NUTRITIONIST IN NEWS PUBLICATION

Sunday, February 27, 2011, the Toronto Star published an article entitled, "Sick welfare recipients to have harder time accessing diet allowance". The article stated that "current recipients will have to reapply to the program, complete with a signature from a doctor, registered nurse, nutritionist or midwife...".

Following a report from an RD, the College wrote a letter to correct the misinformation about nutritionists. We informed the editor that it was the Registered Dietitian who had the authority to sign the diet allowance forms, not nutritionists. The online article was corrected to replace "nutritionist" with "Registered Dietitian" and the College's letter was published online in the "Letters to the editor" section. It provided education to the public that dietitians are the only regulated nutrition professionals in Ontario.

## How can you help with RD Title Protection?

### USE YOUR RD TITLE

Use your the title, "Registered Dietitian", or "RD" on your name tag, business cards, in staff directories, etc. Seeing the RD title will help members of the public to recognize dietitians as the only regulated nutrition professionals in Ontario.

### CONTACT THE COLLEGE

As a regulatory body, the College is responsible to ensure that only qualified members use the dietitian title. It would be very difficult to do this work without your help. Please continue to let us know when you think a person in your neighbourhood may be using your professional title inappropriately.

### EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER

The publishers of Yellow Pages and other directories react more quickly to complaints received from their customers, than the from the College. If you report to the College about a non-RD appearing under the heading of "Dietitian" in the Yellow Pages directory, the College will take appropriate action. If you also have a Yellow Pages listing, you are urged to contact your Yellow Pages representative and complain that non-regulated nutritionists are listed under the "Dietitian" heading. We can provide you with a template letter, if you need one.

