

# DYSPHAGIA ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

In keeping with its duty to protect the public, the College undertook research to identify areas where there could be potential risks of harm to clients in dietetic practice in 2014. Results revealed that 'swallow assessment and dysphagia management' was one of the three highest levels of perceived risks identified by dietitians in their practice. Addressing the areas of high risk dietetic practice is important to help the College fulfill its public protection mandate.

We are committed to developing the resources and standards to support RDs to practise safely, ethically, and competently in their changing practice environments.

Given the developing context of the practice of dietetics in today's health care and consumer environment, we continue to examine and evolve. We have recently published a new dysphagia policy, *Scope of Practice for Registered Dietitians Caring for Clients with Dysphagia in Ontario* (February 2016), which you can access on the College's website.

## NEW PRACTICE COMPETENCIES FOR DYSPHAGIA ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

To further address specific knowledge and performance indicators, a pan-Canadian working group, formed by the provincial dietetic regulators, has been working on developing *Practice Competencies for Dysphagia*

*Assessment and Management*. These dysphagia competencies are new and will build upon the entry to practice *Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice* (2013) for dietitians in Canada. Together the competencies will facilitate performance indicators for the assessment and management of dysphagia in all jurisdictions across Canada.

To date, these new practice competencies for assessment and management of dysphagia were circulated for feedback with a small number of RDs and interprofessional colleagues.

## VALIDATION OF DYSPHAGIA COMPETENCIES

To validate the 2016 Practice Competencies for Dysphagia Assessment and Management, a national validation consultation via online survey took place across Canada this summer. The results from this survey will enable the provincial dietetic regulators to validate the new *Competencies*. The goal of this survey is to explore how dietitians across Canada practice in the area of dysphagia assessment and management, and to ensure that the dysphagia competencies and performance indicators reflect current practice in Canada.

*Thank you to all dietitians who took time to participate in the survey.*

