

# A Voluntary Undertaking is a Legally Binding Agreement

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Some RDs who are not practicing dietetics choose to enter into a voluntary agreement with the College. They formally agree not to practice dietetics — this includes any dietetic volunteer work — and can keep their general certificate of registration and use of the "Dietitian" title; (for information about what constitutes practicing dietetics, refer to "CDO Definition of Practising Dietetics" (2012) by entering "practising dietetics" in the search box on the College Website).

This agreement is called a "voluntary undertaking". It is a legal document signed by a dietitian and the College. The voluntary undertaking stipulates that any member who has signed such a document must notify the College in advance if they wish to return to practice. The agreement also stipulates that the member must undergo a competency assessment by the College to determine if they are competent before returning to practice.

The Voluntary Undertaking is a legally binding document and must be adhered to so that the College can ensure that RDs are practicing competently and safely. Returning to practice without notifying the College and undergoing a competency assessment is a breach of the undertaking and an act of professional misconduct under the *Professional Misconduct Regulation* (O. Reg 680/93), which states,

> "Failing to carry out an undertaking given by the member to the College or an agreement entered into with the College." O. Reg, 680/93, 1.4.

To avoid a referral to the Inquiries, Complaints, and Repots Committee (ICRC) with an allegation of professional misconduct, members who have signed a voluntary undertaking must remember to notify the College of their desire to return to dietetic practice before doing so.

# Peer and Practice Assessment Changes in 2017

The Quality Assurance (QA) Program is committed to continuous quality improvement in the Peer and Practice Assessment (PPA) process. We have been collecting program data from the PPA Step 1 Multisource Feedback Survey (MSF) tools for four years. The time is right to revisit the performance of the tools and determine whether any modifications would make them more useful to assess the competence of dietitians in the interest of public protection. To that end, the College contracted Wickett Measurement Systems® to evaluate the multisource survey tools and the process for referring RDs to the PPA Step 2.

To date, the process has been found to be sound and we are confident that future revisions will ensure an even smoother process. Some recommendations for changes were implemented in the 2016 MSF surveys. These changes included shortening the surveys to two questions per competency measured, changing the N/A option to" Don't Know" for the Colleague surveys and requiring all participants to submit their tally sheets to the College.

In 2017, to ensure that patients and colleagues are using the full breadth of the 7-point scale, the surveys will include guidance from the College on what a "7" means vs. a "4" which is neutral.

### CRITERIA FOR MOVING ONTO STEP 2

The QA Committee has discretion in making decisions about who moves to the PPA Step 2 based on the dietitian's Z (standard) score. If a dietitian does not have any low scores (but rather has most scores closer to six), they may not be asked to proceed to Step 2. Any dietitian who receives an average score of four or less from a single patient or colleague will be required to complete PPA Step 2.

**In addition to RDs moving onto Step 2 because of lower Z scores or lower individual scores, two or three dietitians whose scores were above the Z score threshold will be randomly chosen to move onto Step 2.**
Why? To ensure we are appropriately identifying RDs who may need remediation to ensure competence.

Some RDs assessed in Step1 may be fortunate to have people complete the surveys who are "generous markers" and conversely, some may be unfortunate to have "markers" who score everyone low. Everyone has experienced that at some point in their careers.

Randomly choosing two or three dietitians whose Z scores and individual scores are high will help ensure that we are identifying members who may have benefitted from "markers" who rate everyone high on surveys. It will also further validate the Step 1 process as being a reliable measure of potential issues in practice.

Step 1 of the 2016 PPA has just concluded with the participation of 217 RDs. The data is being tabulated. Further details about the results of the 2-Step PPA 2016 will be published in the Winter *résumé*.

Peer and Practice Assessment

## Assessors Needed for PPA Step 2

The College is looking for RDs working in Patient Care, Population Health and Management from the GTA, Ottawa/Kingston, and Northern Ontario to conduct the Step 2 Peer and Practice Assessments for the Quality Assurance Program.

**Send your resume by October 15, 2016**

If you are a dietitian working in any of these practice areas and have at least 3 years' experience and interest in being a practice assessor, please send your resume and letter of interest in becoming a Practice Assessor by email to

**qacoordinator@collegeofdietitians.org**