



College of Dietitians of Ontario

Practice Question of the Month

October 2009

Reassigning RDs During a Pandemic

Welcome! To enhance communication and education of our members, the College has developed a *Practice Question of the Month* five-minute module series.

The October 2009 module will cover the topic of *Reassigning RDs During a Pandemic*.

Note that you may have to temporarily disable your computer's pop-up blocker to access the resource links in this e-learning module.

Please take the time at the end of the module to fill out a short survey. We appreciate your input and value your feedback.

Now let's begin...



College of Dietitians of Ontario

An employer has reassigned public health dietitians to screen visitors at an H1N1 immunization clinic. Is it appropriate for RDs to perform this responsibility?

- A) Yes
- B) No

Submit

Clear

An employer has reassigned Public Health Dietitians to screen visitors at an H1N1 immunization clinic. Considering this is an area outside of the dietetic scope of practice, is it an appropriate for RDs to perform this responsibility?

Please select the most appropriate answer to this practice question and click submit when finished.

Answer: Yes

- During a pandemic, RDs may be asked to perform tasks outside of their usual dietetic scope of practice.

The correct answer to this practice question is *Yes*.

During a pandemic, RDs may be asked to perform tasks outside of their usual dietetic scope of practice. It is very appropriate for RDs to accept reassignment of other duties in the best interest of clients.



Assess & Acquire Competence

- RDs need to assess their competence
- Take appropriate steps to acquire competence in a particular area (e.g., screening for flu symptoms)

In accepting tasks outside of the dietetic scope of practice, RDs need to assess their competence and take appropriate steps to acquire competence in a particular area, for example: screening for flu symptoms.

Job Responsibilities Outside of RD Scope of Practice

- Job responsibilities of RDs are continually being expanded
- If asked to perform a new job responsibility, RDs should ask themselves the following questions

Continued...

Over time, the job responsibilities of RDs are evolving due to changes in technology, changes in the dietetic body of knowledge as well as the changes in programs and policies relating to the healthcare delivery system.

If an employer asks an RD to perform a task (or the RD identifies that client care would be enhanced by performing a particular task) and this task may not clearly be within the dietetic scope of practice, RDs should ask themselves the following questions...

Job Responsibilities Outside of RD Scope of Practice, Ask:

1. What is client-centred?
2. Who is the most appropriate to perform task?
3. Any legal barriers or authority mechanisms required?
4. Do I have the appropriate skills & competence?
5. If not, how can I gain skills/knowledge to become competent?

1. Is it client-centred for me to perform the job responsibility?
2. Who is the most appropriate person to perform the task (e.g., myself, the RD, or another health care provider/team member)?
3. Are there any legal barriers restricting me from performing the task(s)? If so, what authority mechanisms do I need to have in place to legally perform such task(s)?
4. Do I have the appropriate skills and competence to perform the task(s)/job responsibilities?
5. If I don't have the appropriate skills and competence, how can I obtain what is necessary to become competent?

Additional Considerations

- Exercise professional judgment
- Communicate with employer
- Feel free to contact the College

In all cases, RDs need to exercise professional judgement as to the conditions under which they should perform various tasks.

If an RD feels that an employer has asked them to perform a task that they feel is not appropriate for the profession, they may wish to express these concerns and rationale to their employer.

If in doubt, RDs may call the College with their inquiry and we may be able to provide additional insight.

Helpful Resource

[Pandemic Policy & Planning Guide for Registered Dietitians in Ontario](#)

The College has developed a *Pandemic Policy & Planning Guide for Registered Dietitians in Ontario*. It is a comprehensive resource outlining the professional and personal responsibilities of Registered Dietitians in Ontario. The *Guide* outlines the expectations, obligations and concepts to be considered when developing a professional practice pandemic plan or a personal plan in the event of a pandemic.

Click on the link on this slide to access this resource.

**Thank you for taking the time to view the
October 2009 Practice Question of the Month.**

Please click [here](#) to access the survey.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking the time to view the October 2009 Practice Question of the Month covering the topic of *Reassigning RDs During a Pandemic*.

Please take a moment to click on the link on this slide and fill out a short survey regarding this five-minute e-learning module.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.