



WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN REGISTERED DIETITIANS START UP A PRIVATE PRACTICE

The College of Dietitians of Ontario will be preparing a resource for RDs wanting to have an independent practice in the future. In the meantime, below are some important considerations when setting up a private practice:

1. Consider the scope of your practice. Will you be providing a general practice or will you be specializing in one area?

2. a) Review chapter 9 of the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#) to make sure you or your practice will not be in any conflict or will not be perceived to be in conflict in any way.

b) Will you be selling products or promoting services that you may benefit from? Promoting a product or service for personal financial benefit could be a conflict of interest. Refer to the [Conflict of Interest & RD Practice](#) article in the Winter 2009 (p. 4) issue of *résumé* newsletter.

3. Will you be advertising your services? The College is currently working on an amendment to the *Professional Misconduct Regulation* prohibiting direct solicitation of clients and using client testimonials to generate business. Refer to the following *résumé* newsletter articles for guidance:
 - Winter 2010 (p. 4): [Advertising & Solicitation](#)
 - Spring 2010 (p. 5): [Testimonials and Direct Solicitation of Clients](#)
 - Summer 2010 (p. 7): [Solicitation of a Client for Business When Your Client is a Group](#)

4. Consider the fees you will be charging for your services. CDO does not set fee schedules. However, we suggest you contact [Dietitians of Canada](#) for suggestions on appropriate fees. Their telephone number is: 416-596-0857. Alternatively, you can contact some of the other private practice RDs in your area to find out the going rate.

5. Charging tax: According to the [Excise Tax Act](#), most dietetic services are exempt from HST and you do not need to charge PST for dietetic counselling services. The College has developed two resources surrounding the taxable services of RDs. Refer to the following links:
 - Page 5 of the Summer 2003 issue of *résumé* newsletter contains an article on [Charging GST](#), HST would now apply.

- Online E-learning module: [Charting GST/HST](#)

6. In a hospital setting, getting informed consent for a series of treatments that includes nutrition intervention may not be the responsibility of the RD. It may be the responsibility of the person explaining the services offered and taking an initial overall history. However, in your independent practice it will be your responsibility to obtain informed consent for your nutrition counselling intervention. This area needs special attention in an independent practice, refer to the [Health Care Consent Act](#) (1996). Chapter 7 of the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#) outlines information surrounding consent to treatment which would also apply to private practice nutrition counselling.
7. Record keeping and documentation is as important in private practice as it is in any practice area. Please refer to the CDO [Proposed Regulation on Records Relating to Members' Practices](#), the [Record Keeping Guidelines for Registered Dietitians \(2004\)](#) and Chapter 8 (Record Keeping) of the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#).
8. Confidentiality, Privacy and access to records: As a private practice RD, you are the Health Information Custodian (HIC) and you are the Privacy Officer of your independent practice. You must acquaint yourself with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*. You may also want to consult the chapters on Confidentiality and Privacy in the [Jurisprudence Handbook for Dietitians in Ontario](#), as well as the [Practice Toolkit for Privacy of Personal Health Information](#). As a HIC, you are responsible for ensuring privacy, confidentiality, storage, retention and access of client health information is secure.
9. Liability Protection: Private practice RDs should carry liability insurance. The Summer 2007, Fall 2007, and Winter 2008 issues of *résumé* newsletter contain articles on liability. Refer to the *Resources > Practice Standards and Resources > Workplace Issues* section of the CDO website to access these articles. Note: the most economical way to carry insurance is through your DC membership. Liability insurance is around \$90/year with a Dietitians of Canada membership.

In addition, it is now mandatory for RDs to carry professional liability insurance effective April 1, 2011. Refer to the document on [Frequently Asked Questions Professional Liability Insurance](#) as well as [professional liability insurance information](#) in the News section on CDO's website.

10. Personal injury/disability insurance: There are some employers that require contracted RDs to have some form of independent personal injury/disability coverage. This is because the contracted employees are not covered under the facility's Workplace Safety & Insurance Board of Ontario (WSIB) insurance plan. In addition, the Professional Liability Insurance that many private practice or consulting RDs have through Dietitians of Canada, doesn't cover RDs who encounter a personal injury in the workplace that wasn't caused by a third party (i.e., an RD slips and falls and breaks their leg at work).

For, RDs there are two options:

- A. Obtain individual WSIB insurance. RDs can investigate this option through the [WSIB](#) website or contact WSIB by phone at: 1-800-569-7919 or 416-344-4526.

 - B. Obtain personal injury/disability insurance through an independent insurance company (refer to the '[How to Obtain Coverage](#)' section). RDs can look into rates from many insurance companies to determine the most economical option. The insurance company that offers the Professional Liability Insurance through Dietitians of Canada (the professional associations) offers such insurance. When we contacted them, they indicated they may be able to provide discounted rates for personal disability insurance for RDs who currently have the [Professional Liability Insurance through Dietitians of Canada](#).
11. You may find the *Private Practice Guide* developed by the Consulting Dietitians Network of Dietitians of Canada a useful resource. Contact [Dietitians of Canada](#) for further information about this resource. If you are a DC member, you may also want to consider becoming a member of the Consulting Dietitians Network which can provide you with a great deal of resources.
12. As with any business you may want to consult an accountant and/or a lawyer for advice. Some RDs register their business for tax purposes, but others file their taxes as being self-employed. RDs in private practice will need to discuss your options with your accountant and/or lawyer. Refer to the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) website for more information about registering businesses.

Incorporation may be a route you wish to take. There is an article regarding [Health Profession Incorporation](#) that may assist you in this area.

We understand that this document contains a great deal of information to consider when starting a private practice. We have heard RDs say “I am only going to see a couple of clients, why do I have to bother with all of this?” It does not matter if you see one client; your professional obligations are the same.

If you have any other questions or require clarification on any issues, please don't hesitate to contact the College.



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The College of Dietitians of Ontario regulates and supports 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.