

# Moving Forward With Your Ideas

## IDEAS Consultations 2007

**OVER 250 DIETITIANS PARTICIPATED IN 19 SESSIONS ACROSS THE PROVINCE.**

**THE PRESENTATION SLIDES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE CDO WEBSITE**  
**> RESOURCE ROOM**  
**> EVENTS**

The IDEAS consultation gave Registered Dietitians the opportunity to provide us with feedback about the Practice Advisory Program and revisions to the Practice Assessment. The lively discussions at each session were stimulating and generated a wealth of information for the future development of College programs, tools and education agenda. Of those who attended, 74% responded to a survey about CDO activities and programs.

- 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the College has undertaken activities of value to Registered Dietitians.
- 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they valued the opportunity to give the College input on the Practice Assessment revision and the Practice Advisory Service.

### WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

*"I value this annual connection and appreciate the College's commitment to these education sessions."*

*"I like to see that the College is developing tools to support dietitians in their practice rather than providing only punitive action against those who are not meeting standards of competent practice. Great to see the College being proactive to support the knowledge and skills required to ensure optimal practice of RDs."*

*"Please avoid 'make work' projects as well as any duplication of services, whether it be with CDO or with DC, if possible. Our fees are already quite high; appreciate keeping them the same for as long as possible."*

*"I feel much better about the College's role in regulation as well as it's supportive role to RDs after this presentation. I appreciate the explanation about PA and the potential it will serve both the RD and the public."*

*"In terms of the discussion regarding Practice Assessment, it seems that the entire process needs to be more transparent, with clear criteria regarding what is being assessed, plus the outcome of evaluation."*

*"I think these sessions are very valuable in formulating how our QA program will look. I am pleased to hear that there has been great consideration of input from members regarding the 'new and improved' JKAT."*

## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

### What the College should tell the public about RDs

- Participants felt that the public should be informed about College programs that help RDs be competent, safe and ethical in their practice. The Public should know:
  - ✓ Registered Dietitians submit to a practice/peer review that ensures professional practice behaviors such as:
    - confidential provision of care;
    - record keeping according to standards;
    - use of the most recent and relevant practice guidelines and teaching tools;
    - ethical practice;
    - avoidance of conflicts of interest.
  - ✓ Registered Dietitians complete a *Self-Directed Learning Tool* once per year to reflect on their practice, to set and achieve learning goals for continual learning and professional growth.
  - ✓ There are processes in place to ensure that members can learn and apply the laws, guidelines, standards for the dietetic profession.
- Participants suggested that the Public should have access to the following information about a member:
  - ✓ their credentials and what they mean, for example, entry to practice requirements;
  - ✓ years of service as an RD;
  - ✓ specialization and extra credentials, for example, Certified Diabetes Educator;
  - ✓ number of complaints or lack thereof;
  - ✓ pertinent legal history such as fraud and sexual abuse charges;
  - ✓ scope of practice - types of patients and specialization;
  - ✓ member standing - fees paid up, all other obligations met such as SDL tool.

### What would reinforce for you that you are practicing in a competent, safe and ethical way?

- Members reported that they would feel more confident if they knew what standards and guidelines they were expected to follow, that the standards and guidelines were evidenced based and current, and that, if

assessed, they were found to be in compliance of these standards and guidelines.

- In a practice assessment, they wanted feedback from the College, supervisors, or peers who were from similar practice areas.
- Participants wanted assurance that the College would use standardized and validated survey tools for practice assessment.
- Having access to opportunities for knowledge and skill building would also reinforce that they were competent.

### What would you like to see in your practice assessment?

- identification of areas of strength and excellence and those that need attention and improvement;
- feedback from skilled assessors/mentors who are experienced and respected in their areas of practice and can assist RDs in implementing steps for performance improvement;
- regard for work-setting barriers to quality care, if any;
- provision of resources such as evidence, tools, networks, opportunities for knowledge and skill development and innovation;
- should not repeat departmental performance appraisals and reviews.

## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT PRACTICE ADVISORY SERVICE

Members from all practice areas were asked to identify the major challenges that they face in their practice. Generally, the issues identified fell within three major categories:

1. staffing/workload;
2. areas where the College currently provides support; and
3. RD role and scope of practice.

### Staffing/Workload

The most consistently discussed issue was workload pressures resulting from staffing shortages. The causes of the staffing shortages varied, in some places caused by difficulties with recruitment and retention, while in other places resulting from lack of replacement for vacation/sick time, or baseline staffing levels that are not appropriate for

the patient population/volumes. Workload measurement was also discussed as providing external pressure on the RD to see increasing volumes of patients with little regard for quality of care.

The shift to program management has created additional pressures for many RDs. Some practice leaders reported being asked to perform management functions, without having an appropriate FTE allocation or decision-making authority. Other RDs discussed difficulties with communications/relationships between clinical and food services staff when Clinical Nutrition is moved out of Food Services in a program management structure.

### **CDO Support**

Many members discussed having difficulty keeping up with the volume of information that comes their way. Some indicated that they rely on the College to keep them informed about College activities or changes to legislation that will affect their practice. Those who attended the workshops also indicated that they value the information provided and the opportunity to have personal contact with the College during the road shows, and would like to see them continue. RDs suggested several issues for future consideration for the College:

- adapting existing standards/guidelines to the changing technologies of the work environment (electronic medical records, computerized diet offices);
- helping them to better understand the complaints process, by providing examples of complaints received by the college followed by an explanation of the process and actual outcomes;
- developing more standards/guidelines for practice;
- working to address some of the constraints to RD practice within the RHEA and the *Public Hospitals Act* (writing diet orders, glucometer testing, communicating a diagnosis).

### **RD Role and Scope of Practice**

RDs in many settings felt that there is a lack of understanding of the role and the scope of dietetic practice both on the part of the public, as well as from other members of the healthcare team. This lack of understanding sometimes results in:

- a lack of respect for the profession;
- unrealistic expectations for the workload that RDs will carry;
- a lack of understanding of a dietitians' function on the team;
- nutrition advice provided by other members of the Team.

## **What Will the College Do With Your IDEAS?**

### **Create a Practice Assessment that satisfies quality assurance requirements and corresponds to RD needs.**

We have already used your comments to modify the practice assessment.

### **Enhance CDO public information tools.**

As we enhance public information tools such as the website, pamphlets or cards, we will incorporate your comments.

### **Update RD Guides and Tools**

We will update existing practice guides. For example, the *Record Keeping Guidelines* will be updated to reflect the impact of electronic documentation on current dietetic practice.

### **Modify the Register of Dietitians.**

Your input into what the public should know about dietitians is timely as, this year, the College will modify the *Register of Dietitians* to comply with the new *Health Services Improvement Act, 2007*. Your ideas will be considered at the same time. The revised Register must be ready for June 2009.

### **Create an education program, resources and guides that respond to your concerns about practice issues affecting your work.**

Over the next few years, we will develop resources that address the pressing issues you identified in the sessions. Look for workshops and *résumé* articles that address issues arising from workload pressures, like ethical decision-making, risk management, and communicating expectations.