

College of
Dietitians
of Ontario



Strategic Plan 2011-2015

June 23, 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND REGISTRAR

This Strategic Plan sets out the vision, end-goals, objectives and strategies of the College of Dietitians of Ontario. It focuses our activities for the next four years and reflects our passionate commitment to ensure that the College continues to demonstrate excellence in the regulation of the dietetics profession in the public interest.

Pressing environmental issues having an impact on dietetic practice are addressed in this strategic plan. This is a critical time for health care in Ontario. The profession is challenged to respond to the rising priorities of interprofessional collaboration and client-centred care. In this new team environment, the College must offer guidance to ensure that dietitians are competent and able to deliver safe, effective and ethical dietetic services. Wider societal trends also affect the profession including the mobility of health professionals, the entry of internationally-educated professionals to Ontario, the rapid rise of the internet, social media and technology, and increased pressure from consumers and the public for more accountability of all health professions.

The College's commitment to public protection is strengthened in this plan. We will continue to help ensure that Ontario dietitians are practicing to the highest standards in the best interest of the public. We will continue to communicate with the public about what we do and the important role we play in protecting public interest. To accomplish our goals, we will lead proactively in regulating our profession, seeking out and working with partners.

The focus of this Plan is on the following key themes:

- Strengthening our regulatory standards framework to respond to our changing practice environments
- Collaborating internally and externally to ensure our members demonstrate effective practice in care settings which are increasingly interprofessional
- Assuring entry-level and continuing competence
- Maintaining our priority on good governance, effective operations and being an open and accountable organization

The following pages provide a summary of key findings from the environmental scan, insights from our planning sessions and CDO's Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2015. Thank you all for your contributions.

We look forward to putting this Plan into action in the coming years.

Lesia Kicak, MSc., RD
President

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INTRODUCTION	1
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	2
Changing Demographics	2
Government Fiscal Challenges	2
The Development and Use of Electronic Health Records	2
Newly Regulated Health Professionals	3
Shortage in Health Human Resources	3
Facilitating Entry to Practice of Internationally-Educated Professionals and Applicants	3
Increasing Roles for Support Personnel	4
Changes in Scope of Practice	4
Evolving Models of Interprofessional Care.....	5
Heightened Focus on Risk, Safety and Quality Care.....	5
Changing Practice Settings and a Broadening Orientation to Health	5
Increased Use of Technology	6
Entry to Practice Competencies	7
Changing Practicum Education Requirements	7
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES	8
END GOALS	9
END GOAL OBJECTIVES 2011-2015	10
END GOAL 1: An Effective Regulatory Framework for the Quality and Safety of Dietetic Practices	10
END GOAL 2: Competent Members who are Compliant with CDO Standards.....	11
END GOAL 3: Informed and Knowledgeable Registered Dietitians Engaged in Effective Practice in their Environments.....	12
END GOAL 4: Support of the Attainment of an Adequate Supply of Registered Dietitians	13
END GOAL 5: An Effective Organization with Optimal Use of Resources	14
CONCLUSION	15

INTRODUCTION

The College of Dietitians of Ontario regulates the profession of dietetics in the interest of people in Ontario. Its responsibilities are set out in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA) and *Dietetics Act*. Our College sets, maintains and enforces standards related to qualifications, registration, continuing competence, conduct and ethics of Registered Dietitians (RDs). Our organization assists people in Ontario to access services and handle their questions and concerns. We also have a responsibility to assist over 3,200 Registered Dietitians to work collaboratively and respond to changes in their practice environments.

In the winter of 2011, the College set out to renew its Strategic Plan. The Council established a Strategic Planning Committee and a consulting firm, *The Accountability Group Inc.* (TAG), was engaged to facilitate our strategic planning process. Lyn McDonell of TAG conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders regarding trends in society, changes in the regulation of health professionals, and shifts and challenges in our members' practice environments. She also conducted workshops with the College's program lead staff. What surfaced from these interviews and workshops were key developments in the environment and issues for Council direction.

To provide strategic direction and confirm the plan, the Council met three times. Members of Council dialogued on the future, reflected on stakeholder input, and identified key themes for future focus. Their goal was to ensure that our obligations and mandate continued to be met and surpassed with excellence.

This is a report of what we discovered, some key themes motivating our focus, and strategic goals set for the next 4 years (through to 2015).

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The following trends are affecting the College and the professionals we govern and regulate.

Changing Demographics

Demographic shifts (population growth and aging) are in play. There is great diversity of cultures in Ontario. Some changes in the population mix are common across Ontario and some are specific to certain communities.

A doubling of Ontario's senior population by 2030 is expected to increase demand for health care. An aging population means that illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and arthritis are becoming more prevalent and demands for care are rising. Chronic disease prevention and management initiatives in areas such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis, asthma, dementia, mental health and arthritis will be needed.

While, as a whole, trends suggest additional demands on the limited resources of government, the health care system and community organizations, it is not certain what the future demands will be on the profession of dietetics in relation to the changing demographics in Ontario.

Government Fiscal Challenges

According to *Ontario's Long-Term Report on the Economy*, released in January 2010 "health care costs make up 42 per cent of the Ontario government's total program spending and in the near future that could rise to 50 per cent if health care costs grow faster than other areas of government spending."

The government will increasingly attend to driving value for money invested and quality, even as overall expenditures grow.

The Development and Use of Electronic Health Records

Electronic record keeping exists now at an institutional level and its use is increasing. Clients increasingly expect access to their own information. Engaged in their own health care, they strive to be more empowered with information they need as informed consumers.

Interprofessional team members may need access. Shared information with common standards will increase interoperability amongst many organizations and information systems will connect providers to each other and the other parts of the health system.

eHealth Ontario is developing a harmonized province-wide electronic health records system that will harness the power of information technology and shared systems to improve the delivery of health care, increase patient safety, reduce health care costs and streamline public health reporting. Ehealth standards will facilitate the exchange of standardized data among different information systems, and across organizations.

Registered Dietitians will be among the first health professionals registered to use eHealth.

Newly Regulated Health Professionals

New professions such as naturopaths, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, acupuncturists, and kinesiologists are becoming regulated under the RHPA. Some of these professions and their scopes of practice include providing nutrition care to clients.

Shortage in Health Human Resources

Given the demographic shift of patients and an aging workforce of providers, it is expected that Ontario will have increasingly insufficient numbers of most, if not *all*, health human resources to meet needs. A severe shortage is developing, in part because there was insufficient recruitment and production of various types of health professionals in the past decades.

Health human resources planning is now a governmental priority¹. Over the next ten years, Ontario is expected to pursue a range of strategies both to establish and support new models of practice and to remove barriers that prevent the most effective and efficient use of the health professionals it has. The systems goal is that health care providers work to their full competencies and skills in collaboration with other providers to meet population health needs.

CDO Council members noted that, in this environment of fiscal challenges and health human resource shortages, dietitians may be expected to carry a heavy workload and see more clients.

Facilitating Entry to Practice of Internationally-Educated Professionals and Applicants

The government is taking steps to make full use of health human resources for internationally-trained health care providers (including Registered Dietitians) who wish to immigrate to Ontario – or who live here already. Some of these individuals may have special challenges in supplying and validating credentials, satisfying educational/practice requirements,

¹ CDO provides data on Registered Dietitians in Ontario to the government contributing to a database established as an initiative of the HealthForceOntario.

demonstrating language fluency, and applying food and nutrition knowledge in Ontario's cultural context, and as a consequence, passing the professional registration examination.

Regulatory colleges must ensure that their tools objectively and fairly assess competence and equivalencies to ensure that internationally-educated professionals are prepared to provide safe and competent practice in the Canadian cultural context.

Increasing Roles for Support Personnel

Ontario's strategy involves establishing new health care professional roles in areas of high need. Certain support roles to other health professionals are coming under scrutiny and regulation. Examples are the new role of the Physician Assistant, Anesthesia Assistant and the Pharmacy Assistant, the latter now regulated by the College of Pharmacists of Ontario.

Diet technicians and clinical nutrition assistants support Registered Dietitians in practice. Stakeholders highlighted how important it is to the safe practice of dietitians that individuals in these support roles are competent.

Changes in Scope of Practice

A scope of practice statement describes what a profession does, the methods it uses, and its purpose. On May 11, 2009, Bill 179, the *Regulated Health Professions Statute Law Amendment Act*, was introduced to allow nurse practitioners, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dietitians, midwives and medical radiation technologists to perform health care activities that they were previously unauthorized to provide.

For Registered Dietitians, Bill 179 outlined the following changes to the dietetic scope of practice which are now in effect:

- i. Performing a procedure below the dermis to take blood samples by skin pricking for the purpose of monitoring capillary blood readings while practicing dietetics (now in effect);
- ii. Acting as an "evaluator" for the purpose of the *Health Care Consent Act* (1996) to permit an Registered Dietitian to act as an evaluator to find a person capable or incapable of providing consent with respect to admission to a care facility where consent is required by law (now in effect);

In addition, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care formally expressed its policy decision to authorize Registered Dietitians to order lab tests in public hospitals and other facility and community settings. The authority for Registered Dietitians to order lab tests is expected to enable timely and efficient client-centred care.

The College has prepared a proposal to list and justify the specific lab tests. This proposal was submitted to the Ministry on February 4, 2011 to aid their work in developing a Minister's regulation. The full authority for Registered Dietitians to order lab tests will not take effect until the Ontario government amends regulations.

Evolving Models of Interprofessional Care

All health professional colleges must develop supporting strategies to fulfill the requirements of the new objects associated with Bill 179.

These objects promote interprofessional collaboration in the delivery of client-centred care. According to HealthForceOntario, interprofessional care is the provision of comprehensive health services to clients by multiple health caregivers who work collaboratively within and across settings to deliver quality care.

The implications for regulatory colleges are that they support registrants' engagement in interprofessional collaboration. Colleges are expected to work together to develop common standards where their professions provide the same or similar services, making team-based care a key component of health college quality assurance programs and requiring all regulated health professionals to have professional liability insurance.

Heightened Focus on Risk, Safety and Quality Care

A health regulatory college exists to regulate the profession and protect the public interest. Regulatory colleges need to increasingly understand and appreciate how safety principles and current concepts of quality create context for their accountabilities.

Attributes of quality are accessible, effective, safe, efficient, patient-centred, equitable, appropriately resourced, integrated, and focused on population health. Patient or client safety entails reduction and mitigation of unsafe acts within the health care system as well as to the use of best practices shown to lead to optimal patient/client outcomes.²

Health regulatory colleges have a key role to play in patient safety, and quality. Since colleges establish standards that govern their registrants, increased attention is required to risk management. Risk-based competence models that promote public confidence in the quality and safety of services from health care providers are becoming central to a college's role and accountability.

Changing Practice Settings and a Broadening Orientation to Health

Registered Dietitians work in a wide variety of settings. These include front line clinical and community settings, industry, education institutions, and media outlets. Registered Dietitians

² Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Canadian Patient Safety Dictionary. October 2003: p.12.

are in private practice, home care, hospitals, community health centres, community health centres, family health teams, universities, health clubs, and food and pharmaceutical companies.

The role or area of practice of Registered Dietitians is equally varied. Their activities span from clinical work with individuals and families and health promotion with individuals and communities, to management, policy development, program planning, communications, sales and marketing, teaching and research, and communications.

This diversity of practice creates diverse demands and needs.

Members practicing in non-clinical areas experience issues and experiences that are different from clinical practice. They have expressed a need for different supports and quality assurance for roles that are not clinical (e.g., administrative, policy or management positions)³.

In certain settings, there is an increased focus on risk reduction, management of chronic disease and community-based health care. All regulated health professionals including Registered Dietitians are encouraged to be “health coaches”, empowering the individual with education and information so they take more charge of their choices. While this is not new, the imperative is that people become more responsible for their own health. The focus of attention in caring for individuals is on the person with a condition, rather than prescribing for the condition or disease itself.

As Registered Dietitians become increasingly involved in general health promotion, their practice in group programs may pull them into a broader orientation to health and a shift in practice for them. Related is the focus on primary care and prevention. As noted above interprofessional teams now aim to educate patients to enhance self-management and must exchange knowledge intra-professionally on an ongoing basis.

In many settings, Registered Dietitians may not get advice and support from supervisors and peers who are dietitians and know dietetics. Individual Registered Dietitians are responsible for managing their own practice independently. Employers may not fully understand the scope of practice of Registered Dietitians.

Increased Use of Technology

Technology has made a quantum leap since the last strategic planning process. Technology is now being deployed in all aspects of business with greater impact on how people obtain information and learn.

This has many layers.

³ R.A. Malatest & Associates Achievement and Impact Evaluation Report, 2010

Organizations are expected to be current and reflect new practices in their education and communication projects using multiple technologies and mediums. Repetition of key information is required across different channels and in different formats.

Social media is on the rise and organizations increasingly must set out their “social strategy” to manage this dimension.

In many sectors, solutions to automate back office processes are transforming operations – particularly information and member management, document capture and storage, business process workflow, collaboration between offices and information accessibility through the organization and online to stakeholders.

Entry to Practice Competencies

In 2010, the Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP) received federal funding to support a national Integrated Practice Competencies Project. The competencies will be used across the country to determine safe, effective and ethical dietetic practice at the entry level. They will allow dietitians to access job opportunities without the need for re-certification.

CDO is a key participant in PDEP.

Changing Practicum Education Requirements

An Ontario Task Force on Dietetic Education is addressing the need to expand practical dietetic education in Ontario and develop a more responsive and accessible model of education for the province. The College continues to be part of the leadership group for this work.

Too many of the qualified graduates of the university food and nutrition programs cannot access the internship positions needed to qualify for registration with the College. This is occurring at a time when there is a shortage of Registered Dietitians in Ontario. The Task Force is now consulting on a model and implementation issues for dietetics education that would increase the capacity for practical education, better integrate academic and practical learning, and integrate practical education into university programs.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

A mission is a statement of organizational purpose. CDO's mission is:

The College of Dietitians of Ontario exists to regulate and support all 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.

Vision

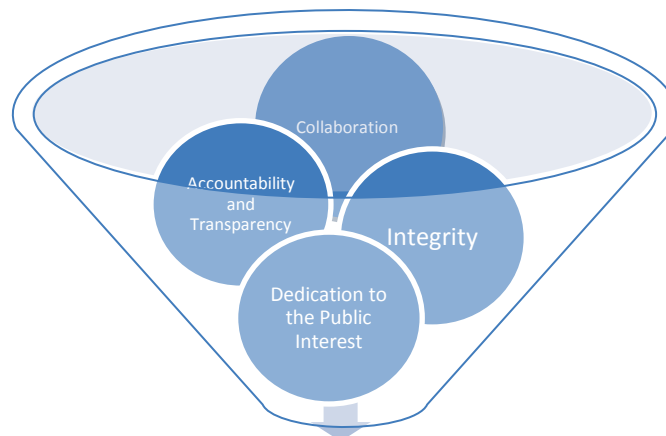
A vision describes what our organization will look like if it succeeds in achieving its goals and its full potential. CDO's vision is:

People of Ontario are confident that the College demonstrates regulatory excellence in the public interest.

Values

The Council has set out these values to guide our behaviour and decision-making. We are dedicated in all our actions and decisions to these core values:

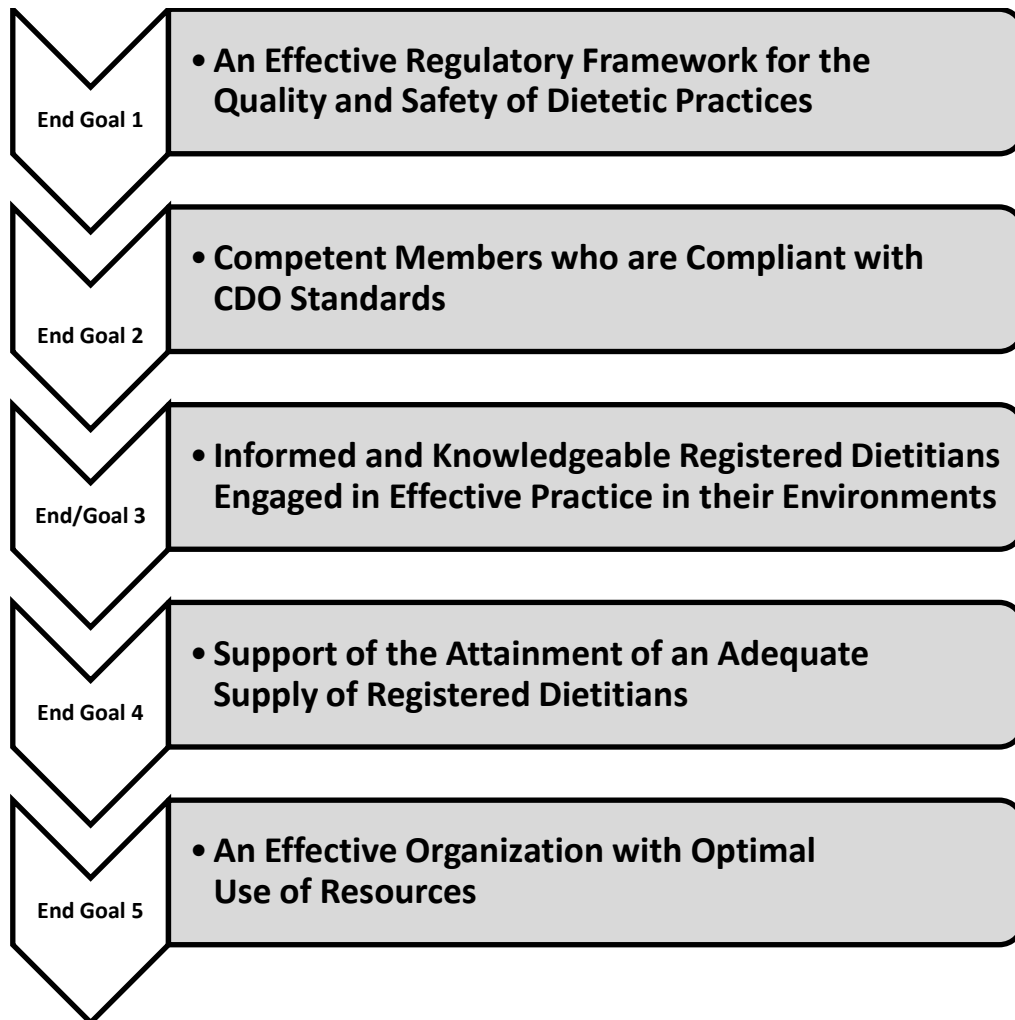
- Public Interest
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Accountability and Transparency



Values of the College

END GOALS

End Goals define what our organization must accomplish, taking into account all of our obligations. They prescribe the results that the Council has set out for the CDO to achieve over the Plan Horizon:



END GOAL OBJECTIVES 2011-2015

End Goals define our desired results. Objectives set out our *action towards the broad measurable dimensions* that define the successful accomplishment of those End Goals.

END GOAL 1

An Effective Regulatory Framework for the Quality and Safety of Dietetic Practices

Regulatory standards are separate and distinct from the appropriate standards of care for a condition or area of practice. CDO's areas of concern relate to the standards of competency and conduct of the provider.

Objectives

- 1.1 Develop a **CDO Regulatory Standards Framework** entailing that, in its standards and programs, CDO will:

Standards

- 1.1.1 Define a "regulatory standard".
- 1.1.2 Ensure mechanisms for continuous monitoring of issues for which standards are required.
- 1.1.3 Set priorities for regulatory attention with high regard for risk and public safety, and develop necessary standards.
- 1.1.4 Demonstrate a collaborative process for standards development.
- 1.1.5 Interpret standards for various practice settings and within the context of changing scopes of practice and practice environments.

Programs

- 1.2 Improve assessment mechanism for *entry to practice* qualifications ensuring continued adherence to the principles for transparency, objectivity, impartiality and fairness.
- 1.3 Enhance the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance program relevant to all emerging and high risk areas of practice.
- 1.4 Develop mechanisms of Quality Assurance to enable non-active members to continue in a non-restricted, or General Certificate of Registration.

END GOAL 2

Competent Members who are Compliant with CDO Standards

Registered Dietitians are competent and compliant with laws, regulations, policies, and standards. Registered Dietitians, the public, employers, and relevant government bodies perceive CDO policies and proceedings as transparent, effective, and fair.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Improve assessment of qualifications for registration revising policies and ensuring objectivity of processes.
 - 2.1.1 Monitor and identify how new Registered Dietitians qualify given new models of dietetic education.
- 2.2 For practice activities, in which risk is identified (prioritized in our regulatory framework above), describe competencies and develop appropriate tools to enable self and peer assessment.
- 2.3 Ensure effective and timely enforcement of applicable laws and regulations through accessible policies and processes.

END GOAL 3

Informed and Knowledgeable Registered Dietitians Engaged in Effective Practice in their Environments

Registered Dietitians know and understand the laws, standards, ethics and policies that have an impact on their profession. Their practice reflects current concepts of interprofessional collaboration, continuous quality improvement and lifelong learning.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Provide specific and relevant support to Registered Dietitians in all areas of dietetic practice.
- 3.2 Create ways for Registered Dietitians to identify the issues in their practice environments for which College guidance or policies may be required.
- 3.3 Increase utilization by Registered Dietitians of processes and tools intended to enhance their learning and quality improvement.
 - 3.3.1 Develop and facilitate use of tools and educational products using new technological processes and resources.
 - 3.3.2 Ensure relevant content, consideration of different learning styles, and ease of use.
 - 3.3.3. Create tools to help Registered Dietitians identify and measure issues in their *individual* practice to be addressed through CQI and lifelong learning

END GOAL 4

Support of the Attainment of an Adequate Supply of Registered Dietitians⁴

The support of public access to Registered Dietitians is distinct from promoting the services of Registered Dietitians to the public (not the College Role). The College's role is to contribute to the removal of barriers to the supply of Registered Dietitians in Ontario and assist health human resources planning in Ontario and nationally. During this plan period 2011-2015, the College will work with the educational system in Ontario to incorporate CDO standards into dietetic education.

Objectives

- 4.1 Collect and transfer data to support the mapping of dietetic workforce information enabling health human resources planning in Ontario and Canada.
- 4.2 Support the transition to the new dietetic education model with focus on assurance of competency outcomes.
- 4.3 Prepare for implementation of the new provisional class of membership.

⁴ This end/goal is rooted in the duty of the College to "work in consultation with the Minister to ensure, as a matter of public interest, that the people of Ontario have access to adequate numbers of qualified, skilled and competent regulated health professionals"

END GOAL 5

An Effective Organization with Optimal Use of Resources

This goal supports the College in building on its foundation as an accountable organization in the regulation of dietetics by strengthening the people, processes and capacity of the organization to achieve the other end goals effectively.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Ensure excellent governance of the College through the work of Council.
- 5.2 Build and strengthen human resources capacity to deliver on College goals.
- 5.3 Update and ensure effective technology supporting delivery and evaluation of programs and communication with the public, members and stakeholders.
- 5.4 Continue to ensure ongoing planning, oversight, decision-making, and program development is based on information and evidence, and reflects commitment to our End Goals and their objectives.

CONCLUSION

The College Council acts as the link between the College and the people of Ontario. It has set out this Strategic Plan as the cornerstone for advancing the work of the College in the public interest. It provides direction for our work in regulating the dietetic profession for the period 2011-2015.

We take our responsibilities very seriously as a self-regulatory body. The government has delegated its regulatory functions to our profession. Therefore, we will make this Plan and its End Goals and Objectives front and centre in everything we do. This is so that the value of their impact can be realized.

The Council is committed to continuous monitoring of the progress of the goals set out in the Strategic Plan. While this Plan will help ensure our organization's ability to meet our mandate, we know we must respond nimbly to emerging opportunities and challenges.

We look forward to working with our valued members, stakeholders and others to accomplish our goals.

Thank you to all who were involved in the planning process. Your contribution to our thinking and the Strategic Plan is much appreciated.

We are on a path to making an even greater impact on the practice of the dietetics profession in the public interest.