

Chapter 7

Restricted Activities

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

- Defining Restricted Activities
- Restricted Activities in Dietetic Practice
 - Insertion and Removal of Tubes
 - Prescribing Parenteral Nutrition
 - Prescribing or Administering Diagnostic Imaging Contrast Agents
 - Psychosocial Interventions
 - Provision of Drugs, Including Samples
- Performance of Restricted Activities
- The Authorization Process
- Chapter Summary
- Case Scenario
- Chapter Quiz
- References

Defining Restricted Activities

In Alberta, the Government has defined “restricted activities” as “procedures or services that require specific professional competence to be performed safely.”²⁷ By law, restricted activities are regulated health services that can only be performed by individuals who are authorized by their College to perform them. “The activities are considered to represent the most significant, invasive, and if not carried out by a qualified, competent service provider, potentially harmful healthcare services.”²⁸ Other provinces, such as Ontario, use the term “controlled acts”. Restricted activities are a key public protection mechanism of the legislation.

KEY PRACTICE POINT

By law, restricted activities may only be performed by individuals who are authorized by their College to perform them.

²⁷ Alberta Health. *Health Professions Act – A new law for regulated health care professionals*. 2002, p. 16.

²⁸ Maxston, B. *Understanding the Health Professions Act, A Practical Guide for Colleges, their Members and Healthcare Stakeholders*. Alberta; 2003, p.14.

The *Health Professions Act (HPA)* recognizes that one or more professions can have the competence necessary to perform the same restricted activity. The term “restricted” means that only competent healthcare practitioners may perform these activities, not that they are “restricted” to a particular profession (1).

The Government gives Colleges the authority in regulation to authorize members to perform restricted activities that are a part of current professional practice, to establish the competencies, standards and guidelines for the performance of restricted activities and to determine how competence will be demonstrated and maintained. The Regulation for each college lists the restricted activities that its members may be authorized to provide.

The 18 restricted activities identified by the Alberta Government include a range of health services such as performing surgical procedures, setting a fractured bone or prescribing drugs, and are found in Schedule 7.1 of the *Government Organization Act (GOA)* (please refer to <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/>).

In addition to outlining which health services are restricted activities, the legislation also states very clearly which activities are not restricted. Section 7.1 2(2) of the *GOA* states those activities that are **not** restricted activities; they are as follows:

- “(a) activities of daily living, whether performed by the individual or by a surrogate on the individual’s behalf,
- (b) giving information and providing advice with the intent of enhancing personal development, providing emotional support or promoting spiritual growth of individuals, couples, families and groups, and
- (c) drawing venous blood.”²⁹

KEY PRACTICE POINT

Each professional has a responsibility to ensure that before performing any activity, whether specified as restricted or not, that they are competent to perform the activity and that it is in the best interests of the client that the activity be performed.

Subject to certain exceptions, restricted activities can only be performed by regulated members who are authorized to do so by their profession specific *HPA* Regulation. Not all of the professions regulated under the *HPA* in Alberta have specified restricted activities that their members may be authorized to perform. Some professions have stipulated that only members with specific advanced education and experience are able to perform a particular restricted activity. As with all health care services, it is each professional’s responsibility to ensure that before performing any activity, whether it is specified as a restricted activity or not, that they are competent to perform the activity and that it is in the best interests of the client that the activity be performed.

²⁹ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

Restricted Activities in Dietetic Practice

Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* provides a broad description of each restricted activity; some restricted activities include a number or range of discrete activities within the description. The Regulation of the College of Dietitians of Alberta (the College) describes the restricted activities and the specific components of each particular restricted activity that are performed by Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists in their practice. These restricted activities are described in detail in the following pages.

Insertion and Removal of Tubes

In relation to the insertion and removal of tubes, Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* states the following:

“2(1) The following carried out in relation to or as part of providing a health service, are restricted activities:

- (b) to insert or remove instruments, devices, fingers or hands
 - (ii) beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow,
 - (iii) beyond the pharynx
 - (vii) into an artificial opening into the body”³⁰

This restricted activity as stated in the *GOA* is applicable to dietetic practice as described in Section 10(1) of the *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Profession Regulation* which states that those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized may perform the following restricted activities.

“(a) to insert or remove instruments, devices, fingers or hands beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow or beyond the pharynx for the purposes of inserting or removing nasoenteric tubes, if in the provision of nutrition support the regulated member is providing enteral nutrition;

(b) to insert instruments, devices, fingers or hands into or remove them from an artificial opening in the body if, in the provision of nutrition support, the regulated member provides enteral nutrition to clients and inserts or removes gastrostomy or jejunostomy tubes;”³¹

Relevant Definitions

Nutrition Support: The provision of appropriate nutrition therapy in response to the biochemical, physiological and pharmacological aberrations occurring with disease or trauma. Nutrition support includes both parenteral and enteral nutrition.

³⁰ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

³¹ Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*; 2002.

Enteral Nutrition: Feeding provided through the gastrointestinal tract via a tube, catheter, or stoma that delivers nutrients distal to the oral cavity. ³²

Link to Dietetic Practice

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are performing these restricted activities when they insert or remove nasoenteric tubes or insert or remove replacement gastrostomy and jejunostomy tubes into a well established site, when providing nutrition support. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who perform these restricted activities typically work in acute and chronic care, in-patient, out-patient and homecare settings.

The required competence indicators for performance of these restricted activities are summarized in Appendix 4.

Prescribing Parenteral Nutrition

In relation to prescribing parenteral nutrition, Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* states the following:

“2(1) The following carried out in relation to or as part of providing a health service, are restricted activities:

(f) to prescribe a Schedule 1 drug within the meaning of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*”³³

This restricted activity as stated in the *GOA* is applicable to dietetic practice as described in Section 10(1) of the *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Profession Regulation* which states that those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized may perform the following restricted activities:

“(c) to prescribe a Schedule 1 drug within the meaning of the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act* for the purposes of providing nutrition support;

(d) to prescribe parenteral nutrition if the regulated member is providing nutrition support and the member is authorized to prescribe a Schedule 1 drug within the meaning of the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act*,”³⁴

Note that the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act* was replaced by the *Health Professions Act* and *Pharmacy and Drug Act* in April 2007.

³² American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. Retrieved January 15, 2014 from: http://www.nutritioncare.org/Professional_Resources/Guidelines_and_Standards/Guidelines/2012_Definitions_of_Terms_Style_and_Conventions_Used_in_A_S_P_E_N_Board_of_Directors-Approved_Documents/

³³ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

³⁴ Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*; 2002.

Relevant Definitions

Nutrition Support: The provision of appropriate nutrition therapy in response to the biochemical, physiological and pharmacological aberrations occurring with disease or trauma. Nutrition support includes both parenteral and enteral nutrition.

Parenteral Nutrition: A complex prescription involving macronutrients, micronutrients and pharmacological agents that are administered intravenously either by means of a large central vein (usually the superior vena cava) or a peripheral vein (usually in the hand or forearm).³⁵

Prescribe: The description of “prescribing activity” that is widely accepted across professions is: determining the right dose, the right drug, the right route and the right time for the right person. In the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, prescription means “a direction by a person who is authorized by an Act of the Legislature of Alberta or an Act of the Parliament of Canada to prescribe drugs, directing that a drug be dispensed to or for the patient named in the direction”³⁶.

Drug Schedules: The drug schedules are created by the provincial and federal governments and reflect an assessment of risk to the public from the drug and the level of professional control required for a client’s safe and effective drug use. Drugs may be moved between the drug schedules due to changes in the assessment of risk and may be found on any or all three of the drug schedules depending on factors such as the concentration of the drug i.e. vitamin and mineral supplements. Drug schedule information may be found on the Alberta College of Pharmacists website at pharmacists.ab.ca. A brief description of the drug schedules is as follows:

KEY PRACTICE POINT

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized to perform restricted activities related to prescribing, recommending or providing drugs are responsible to understand the drug schedules and to know which schedule drugs that they are working with fall under.

Schedule 1 Drugs

Drugs found on Schedule 1 require a prescription.

Schedule 2 Drugs

Schedule 2 drugs do not require a prescription but are available only from a pharmacist or practitioner who is authorized to provide them. They are considered “behind the counter” and are located in pharmacies and institutions in an area where there is no public access and no opportunity for self-selection.

³⁵ Adapted from American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. Retrieved January 15, 2014 from http://www.nutritioncare.org/Professional_Resources/Guidelines_and_Standards/Guidelines/2012_Definitions_of_Terms_Style_and_Conventions_Used_in_A_S_P_E_N_Board_of_Directors-Approved_Documents/

³⁶ Province of Alberta. *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. P-13.

Schedule 3 Drugs

Schedule 3 drugs do not require a prescription and are available in the self-selection area of the pharmacy.

Link to Dietetic Practice

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are performing these restricted activities when they prescribe parenteral nutrition and Schedule 1 drugs when providing nutrition support. While these two activities are separate restricted activities in legislation, in dietetic practice they are integrated. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists must be competent to prescribe Schedule 1 drugs in order to receive authorization to prescribe parenteral nutrition. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists may prescribe Schedule 1 drugs required in the provision of parenteral nutrition only; no other Schedule 1 drugs may be included in the prescription by Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists because there is no authorization in Legislation to do so. Schedule 2 drugs may be included in the formula as they do not require a prescription. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who perform these restricted activities typically work in acute and chronic care, in-patient, out-patient, home care and rehabilitation settings.

The required competence indicators for performance of these restricted activities are summarized in Appendix 4.

Prescribing or Administering Diagnostic Imaging Contrast Agents

In relation to prescribing or administering diagnostic imaging contrast agents, Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* states the following:

“2(1) The following carried out in relation to or as part of providing a health service, are restricted activities:

(j) to prescribe or administer diagnostic imaging contrast agents;”³⁷

This restricted activity as stated in the *GOA* is applicable to dietetic practice as described in Section 10(1) of the *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Profession Regulation* which states that those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized may perform the following restricted activity:

“(e) to prescribe and administer oral diagnostic imaging contrast agents if in the provision of medical nutrition therapy a regulated member performs a videofluoroscopic swallowing study or assists with the study;”³⁸

³⁷ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

³⁸ Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*; 2002.

Relevant Definitions

Medical Nutrition Therapy: The use of specific nutrition services to treat an illness, injury or condition, involving (a) assessment of the client’s nutritional status and (b) treatment, which includes nutrition therapy, counseling or use of specialized nutrition supplements.³¹

Link to Dietetic Practice

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are performing this restricted activity when they determine the amount of barium contrast agent a client receives and / or administer the contrast agent, by way of mouth, during a videofluoroscopic swallowing study while providing medical nutrition therapy. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who perform this restricted activity typically work in acute and chronic care, in-patient, out-patient and rehabilitation settings.

The required competence indicators for performance of this restricted activity are summarized in Appendix 4.

Psychosocial Interventions

In relation to psychosocial interventions, Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* states the following:

“2(1) The following carried out in relation to or as part of providing a health service, are restricted activities:

- (p) to perform a psychosocial intervention with an expectation of treating a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs
 - (i.) judgment
 - (ii.) behaviour
 - (iii.) capacity to recognize reality, or
 - (iv.) ability to meet the ordinary demands of life;”³⁹

This restricted activity as stated in the *GOA* is applicable to dietetic practice as described in Section 10(1) of the *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Profession Regulation* which states that those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized may perform the following restricted activity:

“(f) to perform psychosocial intervention if a regulated member is providing psychonutrition therapy in the treatment of disordered eating patterns;”⁴⁰

³¹ American Dietetic Association: ADA’s definition for nutrition screening and nutrition assessment. *J Am Diet Assoc* **94** (8):838–839, 1994

³⁹ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

⁴⁰ Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*; 2002.

Relevant Definitions

Psychonutrition Therapy: The integrated application of psychotherapy and medical nutrition therapy in treating the underlying psychopathology of persons with disordered eating patterns.

Medical Nutrition Therapy: The use of specific nutrition services to treat an illness, injury or condition, involving (a) assessment of the client's nutritional status and (b) treatment, which includes nutrition therapy, counseling or use of specialized nutrition supplements.³¹

Link to Dietetic Practice

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are performing this restricted activity when they provide psychonutrition therapy in the treatment of disordered eating. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists may not use psychotherapy in treating other disorders such as dementia, schizophrenia or attention deficit disorders as such treatment is beyond the scope of dietetic practice.

A Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist is performing this restricted activity when **both** of the following criteria are present in treating disordered eating:

1. Psychonutrition therapy is used to treat the underlying cause (psychopathology) of the disordered eating. Psychonutrition therapies may include but are not limited to:
 - Behaviour modification
 - Cognitive therapy
 - Body image therapy
 - Anger management
 - Aversion therapy
2. The client receiving treatment has a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behaviour and capacity to recognize reality or meet the ordinary demands of life. The substantial disorder may be characterized by a disordered eating diagnosis (i.e. a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) or Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) assessment).

³¹ American Dietetic Association: ADA's definition for nutrition screening and nutrition assessment. *J Am Diet Assoc* **94** (8):838–839, 1994

³¹ American Dietetic Association: ADA's definition for nutrition screening and nutrition assessment. *J Am Diet Assoc* **94** (8):838–839, 1994

Treatment of disordered eating may include specialized treatment settings and teams, ongoing involvement of other health professionals including physicians, psychotherapists and psychologists. Ongoing assessment and professional judgment is required to determine where the client is on the continuum of care (between low and high acuity) and to determine if that point has changed.

To more clearly understand when a member is performing and requires authorization to perform this restricted activity, it may be easier to consider when a member is **not** performing the restricted activity.

The following are examples of the types of activities that are NOT restricted and may be performed by any member of the College, who is competent to do so:

- providing nutrition support, medical nutrition therapy, or diet plans to a patient with disordered eating is not a restricted activity.
- providing education and information to a patient with disordered eating is not a restricted activity.
- counseling a patient with disordered eating is not a restricted activity. “Giving information and providing advice with the intent of enhancing personal development or providing emotional support” are not restricted activities under the Legislation.
- using psychonutrition therapy with a patient who has disordered eating is not a restricted activity unless the patient also has a “substantial disorder... that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.”
- working with a client with disordered eating is not a restricted activity unless there is an **intent to treat** the underlying DSM diagnosis

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who perform this restricted activity typically work in acute and chronic care, in-patient, out-patient settings, in special program units and in general psychiatry units.

The required competence indicators for performance of this restricted activity are summarized in Appendix 4.

Provision of Drugs, Including Samples

In relation to the provision of drugs, including samples, Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* states the following:

“2(1) The following carried out in relation to or as part of providing a health service, are restricted activities:

- (g) to dispense, compound, provide for selling or sell a Schedule 1 drug or Schedule 2 drug within the meaning of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*;⁴¹

This restricted activity as stated in the *GOA* is applicable to dietetic practice as described in Section 10(1) of the *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Profession Regulation* which states that those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized may perform the following restricted activity:

“(g) to distribute without payment, for the purposes of nutritional support or medical nutrition therapy, drugs regulated by a schedule to the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act* and pursuant to a prescription, if required by the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act*;⁴²

Again, note that the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act* was replaced by the *Health Professions Act* and *Pharmacy and Drug Act* in April 2007.

Relevant Definitions

Sell (distributing and giving away): The *GOA* defines the term “sell” as follows:

“ ‘sell’ includes

- (i) distribute, trade or barter for money or other valuable consideration,
- (ii) distributing and giving away without expectation or hope of compensation or reward,
- (iii) keeping for sale, and
- (iv) offering for sale;⁴³

The provision of drugs to clients, free of charge, becomes a restricted activity because of the definition of “sell” in the Legislation.

Medical Nutrition Therapy: The use of specific nutrition services to treat an illness, injury or condition, involving (a) assessment of the client’s nutritional status and (b) treatment, which includes nutrition therapy, counseling or use of specialized nutrition supplements.³¹

Drug Schedules: Please refer to information included under Prescribing Parenteral Nutrition on page 96.

⁴¹ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

⁴² Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*; 2002.

⁴³ Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*; R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.

³¹ American Dietetic Association: ADA’s definition for nutrition screening and nutrition assessment. *J Am Diet Assoc* **94** (8):838–839, 1994

Link to Dietetic Practice

This restricted activity is not related to prescribing drugs, but rather is related to the distribution of drugs listed on a drug schedule. The Regulation does not permit Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists to sell drugs. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are performing this restricted activity when they provide drugs such as insulin to their clients when providing medical nutrition therapy. In the case of Schedule 1 drugs, they must be given out in accordance with a prescription or written order.

All members of the College must be aware that providing drugs, including samples as part of their practice may be a restricted activity. It is a member's responsibility to determine whether the drugs they are providing are controlled by a drug schedule. If so, authorization from the College to perform this restricted activity is required. If the drugs or samples being provided are not found on a drug schedule, then authorization is not required as this is not a restricted activity. Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who perform this restricted activity typically work in acute and chronic care, in-patient, out-patient and community settings.

The required competence indicators for performance of these restricted activities are summarized in Appendix 4.

Performance of Restricted Activities

Under the *HPA*, the Government gives colleges the authority to regulate the restricted activities that are a part of current professional practice. Schedule 7.1 of the *GOA* clearly states that no person can perform a restricted activity or a portion of it on or for another person unless they are authorized to do so, or they are supervised under specific conditions (2). In this context, "authorized" means that the person meets at least one of the following criteria:

- The individual is a regulated member of a college under the *HPA* and is authorized by the regulation of a college to perform restricted activities.
- The individual is authorized by regulations made by the Minister of Health under the *HPA* to perform restricted activities.
- The individual is authorized to perform the restricted activity by another enactment.

The terms "supervised" means the following:

- The individual is authorized by a regulation of a college under the *HPA* to perform the restricted activity under supervision; the regulation of the college states how supervision is to be provided.
- The individual has the consent of and is supervised by a regulated member of that college who is authorized to perform the restricted activity.

KEY PRACTICE POINT

Only those Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who are authorized by the College, or those who have notified the College and are appropriately supervised during the training process, may perform restricted activities or any portion of a restricted activity.

It should be noted that only a person authorized to perform a restricted activity may consent to supervise and provide supervision of another person performing the restricted activity or a portion of the restricted activity. As previously indicated, no one may require another person to perform a restricted activity or a portion of it if that person is not authorized to perform the restricted activity. If an authorized person is not available, an individual may provide a restricted activity or a portion of the restricted activity to provide comfort to, or to stabilize a person who is ill, injured or unconscious as a result of an accident or other emergency. Contravention of the Legislation with respect to restricted activities is a serious offence. If the Legislation, the Regulation, or any other guidelines established by the College for the performance of restricted activities are contravened for any reason, the College must be notified immediately.

With respect to restricted activities, the College, members and employers have specific roles and responsibilities. These are summarized as follows:

The College

The College is responsible for regulating the safe performance of restricted activities, authorizing practitioners and issuing practice permits to allow performance of restricted activities. The College establishes the competencies, standards and guidelines for the performance of restricted activities and determines how competence will be demonstrated and authorized. The College is also responsible for monitoring the ongoing competent performance of restricted activities and tracking trends in dietetic practice to assess changes in the restricted activities provided by members.

Members

Members have a responsibility to know which activities are restricted by the College and to identify when restricted activities are being performed. Members will decide whether to provide restricted activities or not, based on the context of their practice and the requirements of their workplace. If a member decides to provide a restricted activity, it is the member's responsibility to obtain authorization from the College to perform the activity as part of their practice. Accountability rests with the member performing a restricted activity to ensure that they are authorized and competent to perform restricted activities. Members are responsible for maintaining ongoing competence for those restricted activities that they are authorized to perform.

KEY PRACTICE POINT

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are responsible to know which activities are restricted by the College and to identify when restricted activities are being performed.

Employers

Employers are responsible for the provision of health services / health programs and for the distribution and appropriate mix of skills in the health workforce. Employers are accountable as health service providers to ensure that employees and students are appropriately authorized or supervised when performing restricted activities. Employers have a key role in providing opportunities for employees to receive training and demonstrate competence to perform restricted activities, and for removing any barriers to performance of restricted activities by authorized practitioners.

Universities, Internship Programs, Dietitians of Canada

Universities and internship programs ensure that undergraduate education and training keep pace with changes in dietetic practice and provide a foundation for the development of the competencies required for dietetic practice.

Dietitians of Canada provides support through the development of continuing education programs and resources.

The Authorization Process

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who wish to become authorized to perform a restricted activity must notify the College to begin the authorization process. After completing the required forms, the Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist may begin the process which involves development of competence during a supervised training period. Once all of the competencies have been met, the appropriate documentation is forwarded to the College and authorization is granted. Once authorized to perform a restricted activity, the Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist will be required to demonstrate ongoing competence to perform the restricted activity. Important information related to the authorization process is outlined below.

Notification

In order to address safety of the public, the College must be able to inform employers and the public that a restricted activity is being performed by an authorized practitioner, that a practitioner is performing a restricted activity under supervision during the training process, or that a practitioner should not be performing the restricted activity.

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists must notify the College prior to training to perform any restricted activity and must complete the required forms. All individuals who are training to perform restricted activities are noted on the College Register.

Development of Competence

The *HPA* defines competence as “the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to provide professional services”⁴⁴. Within their practice, Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists provide the services they are competent to perform; as professionals, they continually identify, develop and maintain the skills necessary to maintain competence. The College has identified competency indicators for the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to perform each of the restricted activities. These competencies must be developed, demonstrated and verified in order for a member to be authorized by the College to perform the activity.

While undergraduate education and training establish a foundation for the performance of these activities, Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists generally develop the specialized expertise to perform restricted activities in the workplace. The method for developing competence will vary from one workplace to another, from one practitioner to another, and from one restricted activity to another. The College sets out guidelines for the development and demonstration of competence that must be met by a member to be authorized to perform restricted activities. The guidelines accommodate a variety of training methods while ensuring the safe practice of restricted activities. The College does not approve specific education or training programs for restricted activities, but recognizes combinations of the following methods of competence development as appropriate:

- attending, observing and assisting with procedures in the presence of authorized practitioners
- receiving individualized training from Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists and other authorized practitioners
- participating in clinical teaching presentations, clinical case conferences, teaching rounds and case studies
- taking part in site based education / training
- self study, including research and literature review
- completing competency based education
- ongoing clinical exposure to the restricted activity, client involvement and follow up

As Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists plan their competence development activities they will need to consider the following:

⁴⁴ Province of Alberta. *Health Professions Act*. R.S.A. 2000, c. H-7. s. 1(1)f.

- the nature of each specific restricted activity they want to be authorized to perform
- the competence indicator being developed
- the availability and appropriateness of training methods
- the consent, supervision and performance requirements, and
- access to appropriate authorized practitioners

Supervision Requirements

A member who performs a restricted activity on a person during competence development / training must have the consent of and be under the supervision of a Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist authorized by the College or a regulated health professional with authorization to perform the restricted activity. The supervising member must be available to consult with and assist when the restricted activity is being performed by the member in training. Supervision by an authorized Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist is not required during competence development / training when the restricted activity is not being performed on a person.

Supervision of Students

According to Regulation and criteria established by the College, students must be enrolled in an internship program approved by the College to perform restricted activities as part of their training. Students may perform a restricted activity as part of their training but must have the consent of, and be under the supervision of a Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist authorized by the College to perform the same restricted activity. The supervising member must be onsite and available to consult with and assist when the activity is being performed on a person.

Authorization

Authorization by the College to perform a restricted activity is based on the member demonstrating that they are competent to perform the restricted activity and that the competent performance of the restricted activity has been verified. The College has not set a specific number of times that a procedure must be performed to demonstrate competence as this will vary depending upon the following:

- the particular restricted activity
- frequency of exposure to the restricted activity, and

- the ability of the individual practitioner

Competence in the performance of a restricted activity is met when the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment to perform the restricted activity have been developed, demonstrated and verified. Once the competent performance of the restricted activity has been observed and verified by an authorized health professional, the member will be issued a practice permit that authorizes them to practice the restricted activity.

It should be noted that members with a temporary practice permit also may be authorized to perform a restricted activity once competent performance has been demonstrated and verified.

Ongoing Competence

Members must be competent each and every time they perform a restricted activity. Authorization to perform restricted activities must be renewed annually; each year when a member applies to renew their practice permit, they will be required to sign a declaration stating that the competence requirements for the restricted activities that they are authorized to perform continue to be met.

If skills have lapsed during the year for any reason, it is the responsibility of the member to upgrade or refresh skills before continuing to perform a restricted activity. The process of maintaining competence to perform restricted activities is part of the Continuing Competence Program (CCP) of the College. As part of this program, a member who performs restricted activities must complete the self assessment process and develop one Competence Plan for each restricted activity that they are authorized to perform. It should be noted that development of Competence Plans related to the performance of restricted activities is done in addition to the basic requirements of CCP.

Chapter Summary

In Alberta, the Government has defined “restricted activities” as “procedures or services that require specific professional competence to be performed safely.”⁴⁵ By law, restricted activities are regulated health services that can only be performed by individuals who are authorized by their College to perform them. The term “restricted” means that only competent healthcare practitioners may perform these activities, not that they are “restricted” to a particular profession. The Government gives Colleges the authority in regulation to authorize members to perform restricted activities that are a part of current professional practice, to establish the competencies, standards and guidelines for the performance of restricted activities, and to determine how competence will be demonstrated and maintained. The 18 restricted activities identified by the Alberta Government are found in Schedule 7.1 of the *Government Organization Act (GOA)*. The Regulation of the College of Dietitians of Alberta (the College) describes the restricted activities and the specific components of each particular restricted activity that are performed by Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists in their practice. These include the following:

- To insert or remove nasogastric, gastrostomy and jejunostomy tubes when providing nutrition support.
- To prescribe parenteral nutrition, including schedule 1 drugs, when providing nutrition support.
- To prescribe and / or administer oral diagnostic imaging contrast agents during a videofluoroscopic swallowing study when providing medical nutrition therapy.
- To distribute drugs regulated by a schedule to the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, according to a prescription when providing nutrition support or medical nutrition therapy.
- To perform a psychosocial intervention when providing psychonutrition therapy in the treatment of disordered eating.

Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists who wish to become authorized to perform a restricted activity must notify the College to begin the authorization process. After completing the required forms, the Registered Dietitian or Registered Nutritionist may begin the process which involves development of competence during a supervised training period. Once all of the competencies have been met, the appropriate documentation is forwarded to the College and authorization is granted. Once authorized to perform a restricted activity, Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists are required to demonstrate ongoing competence to perform the restricted activity.

⁴⁵ Alberta Health and Wellness. *Health Professions Act – A new law for regulated health care professionals*; 2002, p. 16.

References

1. Province of Alberta. *Health Professions Act*, R.S.A. 2000, C. H-7.
2. Province of Alberta. *Government Organization Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. G-10.
3. Province of Alberta. *Registered Dietitian and Registered Nutritionist Regulation*, 2002.