



COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS
OF ALBERTA

Follow-up College Communication re. Webinar: “Regulation Odds and Ends” (September 2023)

During the live presentation of the College’s webinar “Regulation Odds and Ends”, the College received numerous questions from regulated members. The webinar covered topics relevant to Dietitians including using the Nutritionist title, private practice resources, virtual practice in Canada, currency and declaring dietetic practice hours, professional liability insurance and more.

The webinar slides are available on the College website for information on the content of the webinar. Below is information pertaining to the questions posed, and information on how and where to access more information on these topics.

College vs Association:

Provincial legislation requires a structural and functional separation of a profession’s regulatory responsibilities and functions which protect the public, from functions which are directed at the wellbeing of a profession. For the dietetics profession in Alberta, these functions are separate and are performed by two independent organizations: the College of Dietitians of Alberta (a college with regulatory responsibilities) and Dietitians of Canada (a professional association with member service responsibilities). There are no provincial dietetic member associations in Canada at this time.

Resources for College vs Association:

- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 2: Dietetic Regulation*
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Regulated Member Handbook. Section II: College Organization & Operation*

Nutritionist Title:

One of the roles of the College is protecting professional title use in Alberta. In Alberta, the College protects the titles: Registered Dietitian, Registered Nutritionist, Dietitian, Nutritionist, and RD. The word “Registered” is also protected. Regulated members are to use these Alberta protected titles only. For example, RDN may be used by American regulated professionals, but it is not a protected title in Alberta.

Regulated members on the Temporary register must use the title Dietitian only, otherwise regulated members can use the protected title of their choosing. If members use Nutritionist, the College recommends that the member also communicate they are members of the College of Dietitians of Alberta, to eliminate any confusion by the public.

Words such as nutrition or nutritional cannot be protected. Therefore, unregulated individuals can use these terms in some form, provided no protected titles are used. Holistic Nutrition Consultant does not include protected words, and the College has no control over marketing material unless it contains title misuse. Please report unregulated individuals using protected titles, like Nutritionist.

When the College receives a report of title misuse, the name of the reporting individual is never shared.

Resources for Protected Titles:

- Link on College website under [About Us - Protected Titles](#)
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 1: Professionalism*
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Regulated Member Handbook. Section I: Legislation & Regulation*

Virtual Practice in Canada:

Registration requirements are set provincially. To work with clients/patients in Alberta, Dietitians must be registered with the College; and the College only has jurisdiction over its own regulated members' practice within the province. Likewise, when a client/patient resides in another province, the dietetic regulator in that province will have jurisdiction, and require registration with them, to work with that client/patient. This is also the same for other health professions.

If an Alberta patient is away from Alberta for a short period of time, you *may* be able to see them virtually. Please determine if this is necessary or if the consultation can wait until they return.

Virtual, cross border care requires some attention to provincial registration requirements. For example, in private practice, if you encounter a client from another province who wants to work with you, you must contact the regulator in that province to determine their requirements. This also goes for out of country virtual practice. If you live in Alberta and are doing work that is based in another country, you should also reach out to the appropriate regulator to determine their registration requirements.

If you are giving a virtual group class to the general public in-person in Alberta, you meet Alberta's registration requirements. If you are providing a virtual class to a group of people and you know that they come from various provinces, you must contact the regulator in those provinces to confirm their interpretation of this and their registration requirements.

Dietitians can be registered in multiple provinces at once.

If you are registered with the College, and you are seeing Alberta based clients virtually from elsewhere (e.g. you are on a work trip or work out of province), you meet the College's registration requirements; you may need to contact the regulator in the province/country you are visiting to ensure you are meeting their requirements.

If you would like to see what advocacy is happening on this topic, Dietitians of Canada is the professional association, who can advocate for members.

Resources for Virtual Practice:

- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Provincial Registration Requirements for Cross Border Dietetic Practice*
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 14: Social Media, Virtual and Cross Border Practice*

Currency and Dietetic Practice Hours:

Dietetic practice means that you are practicing within the practice statement, are working and/or volunteering in food, nutrition, health, wellness, public/population health, health leadership/management (regulated member teams, foodservice), or education/research in dietetics. You do not count your dietetic practice hours if your work does not fall into one of these categories (e.g. you're working as an accountant; you are managing a flower shop).

Being current means you have accumulated at least 600 hours of dietetic practice work over the past three consecutive years. The College encourages all members to track their dietetic practice hours in their own records, which could be provided to the College should we request evidence of currency.

If you are on leave (maternity or other) and are not practicing dietetics, please email the dates and reason for your leave to the College office, to be noted in your file.

If you are volunteering your services, outside of your employment position, you can add these dietetic practice hours by creating a private practice employment record to your profile. You should have an employment record for each employer and only one record for all other services (private practice, volunteer).

If you are not practicing dietetics, and are not current, but plan to return to dietetic practice, contact the College office for more information on assessment.

Resources for Currency and Dietetic Practice Hours:

- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) – *College Statement on Current Practice*

- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 3: Registration & Practice Permits*
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Regulated Member Handbook. Section III: Registration & Practice Permits*

Professional Liability Insurance:

Liability insurance, either provided by your employer and/or a third party, is required for practice in Alberta. Professional liability insurance protects regulated members from having to pay personally for any harm that clients suffer because of the RD's conduct. If a regulated member does not have insurance and is successfully sued for negligence, they will be personally liable for any damages awarded to the client. Even in the cases where the RD is found not to have been negligent, they will still have to finance the cost of defense. Funding the defense is something else that professional liability insurance will cover.

The College outlines its minimum requirements for insurance on our website, stating \$2 Million minimum liability coverage. Third party liability insurance will be able to meet those requirements in most cases.

The College does not recommend a particular insurer; however, we identify a few options for your consideration that meet the College's requirements. Members are welcome to seek out other insurance companies for a Dietitian policy.

If you explore other insurance providers, determine exactly what you will be covered for in the case of a complaint to the College, and/or finding of fault. Third party insurance coverage protects both you and the public.

Resources for Professional Liability Insurance:

- Link on College website under [For Dietitians – Liability Insurance](#)
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 3: Registration & Practice Permits*
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Regulated Member Handbook. Section III: Registration & Practice Permits*

Legal Name with College:

Under provincial health legislation, the College is required to have a registrant's full legal name (including middle names) on file, which is reported on practice permits and on the Public Register. This allows the public to verify the names and registration status of regulated members who are providing services. The public has a right to know the name and registration status of any professional they are receiving services from; regulated members should ensure they are providing their name, registration number, and practice permit when asked.

All Dietitians, as regulated professionals, have a duty to update their profile within 30 days of any change in the information required for the College's Register. This includes changes to legal name. Members may update their profile information online by logging onto the Registrant Portal to complete a Profile Update.

Resources for Profile Updates:

- Link to the [Registrant Portal](#)
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Regulated Member Handbook. Section I: Legislation & Regulation*

Standards of Practice:

The *Standards of Practice* describe the standards that must be met by all regulated members practicing in Alberta. The *Standards of Practice* are also the basis for the Continuing Competence Program used annually by all regulated members for identifying learning priorities each year. Every regulated member should ensure they are familiar with and in compliance with all *Standards of Practice*.

Resources for Standards of Practice:

- Link on College website under [About Us – Regulatory Documents](#)
- Link on College website under [For Dietitians - Regulated Member Resources](#) - *Professional Practice Handbook for Dietitians in Alberta. Chapter 4: Professional Practice Standards*

Questions?

The College encourages all regulated members to review the resources available on the College website. If, upon review of the resources, you have questions, please contact Shannon Eklund, Director of Professional Practice by email at ppc@collegeofdietitians.ab.ca or by calling the College office at 780-448-0059.