

July 2016



Standards of Practice for Registered Dietitians in Newfoundland & Labrador

Introduction

Registered Dietitians have a professional commitment to the health and well-being of their clients. The Standards of Practice of the Newfoundland & Labrador College of Dietitians (NLCD) outline the behavioral expectations related to dietetic practice in all work environments, including dietitians' ethical and professional obligations.

Standards of Practice are an integral part of the legal and ethical framework for dietetic practice in Newfoundland & Labrador. Dietitians can find information about other aspects of professional practice in the:

- Code of Ethics for Registered Dietitians
- Defining Dietetic Practice & Scope of Practice Statement for Dietitians in Newfoundland & Labrador
- The Dietitians Act

Standards of Practice support registration and licensure decisions (professional conduct and competence) and serve as the link to the entry-to-practice competencies set out in the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEPs). In addition to being the foundation of dietetic education programs, the ICDEPs form the blueprint for the Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination (CDRE), a registration requirement.

The College's mandate under the *Dietitians Act* is public protection. The following form the foundation of the College's quality assurance program which includes:

- the Continuing Competence Program and
- the complaint and discipline processes.

PURPOSE

The Standards of Practice document includes competencies for all areas of dietetic practice:

- clinical
- community/public health

- food service administration
- organizational management
- education
- business and
- research

They are intended for use by:

- dietetic students and educators, as a resource for discussion and evaluation,
- new Temporary Registrants, to identify standards for practice expected of registered dietitians,
- Active Registrants, as a basis for self-assessment and professional development planning under the Continuing Competence Program,
- other health professionals and members of the public, to identify standards expected of Registered Dietitians and outcomes of dietetic practice, and
- the NLCD, to uphold responsibilities associated with being a self-regulated profession and to provide a means of measuring safe and competent practice.

The key concepts of these statements are expanded in this document under four Standard Areas:

1. Professional and Ethical Practice
2. Communication and Collaboration
3. Client-centered Services
4. Leadership, Organization and Service Delivery

Elements

There are three elements to the Standards of Practice.

1. **Standards** are statements of competence. They are written in the present tense and state minimal levels of competent, safe and ethical dietetic practice expected of a Registered Dietitian.
2. **Indicators** define and describe practice behaviours. They are written in the future tense and describe specific behaviours necessary to meet the Standard. Indicators reflect SMART principles - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely – and may be used as assessment criteria to judge performance of the standard.
3. **Practice outcomes** state the outcome that will result when the Standards and Indicators are met. They are written in the future tense.

Standards of Practice, Indicators and Practice Outcomes

Standard Area 1: Professional and Ethical Practice

1.1 Standard

A Dietitian practices dietetics in compliance with legislation and organizational requirements.

Indicators

- a) Practice in compliance with provincial/federal legislation applicable to dietetic practice.
- b) Practice in accordance with NLCD legislation (Dietitian Act, NLCD bylaws).
- c) Practice in accordance with employer's job description, organizational requirements, policies and directives.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect professional services provided by a Dietitian to be in compliance with legislation and organizational requirements applicable to their practice.

1.2 Standard

A Dietitian practices within the NLCD *Defining Dietetic Practice & Scope of Practice Statement for Dietitians in Newfoundland & Labrador*.

Indicators

- a) Practice within the legal scope of practice.
- b) Determine practice situations beyond a Dietitian's professional scope of practice and refer to another health professional.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect that services provided by a Dietitian are in compliance with the practice statement.

1.3 Standard

A Dietitian maintains competence in their practice area.

Indicators

- a) Practice within their personal level of competence, within the NLCD scope of practice statement.
- b) Determine practice situations beyond personal level of competence and consult, refer or obtain further knowledge and skills.
- c) Determine new or anticipated areas of dietetic practice and acquire knowledge and/or skills needed to practice competently.
- d) Meet NLCD's continuing competence requirements.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to practice competently in their practice area.

1.4 Standard

A Dietitian acts ethically in their professional interactions and while providing professional services.

Indicators

- a) Comply with the NLCD Code of Ethics for Registered Dietitians when providing professional services.
- b) Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for professional actions and decisions and for employees/ students/ volunteers under their supervision.
- c) Demonstrate inclusion, honesty and fairness.
- d) Accurately represent dietetic qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills.
- e) Manage ethical violations and dilemmas.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to practice ethically.

1.5 Standard

A Dietitian practices in compliance with privacy legislation^{7,8}

Indicators

- a) Maintain privacy and confidentiality of information obtained during the provision of professional services.
- b) Comply with relevant privacy legislation for the collection, storage, use, disclosure and destruction of client records.
- c) Determine and manage risk of privacy/confidentiality breaches during the transportation/ transmission of client records/ personal information.
- d) Communicate confidential client information when referring or consulting only as necessary, with consent or when legally required, or when the failure to disclose could cause significant harm to the client or others.
- e) Comply in a timely manner with clients' rights to access their health records.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to maintain their right to privacy and confidentiality and to comply with privacy legislation.

1.6 Standard

A Dietitian provides information and obtains informed consent prior to the provision of professional services.

Indicators

- a) Inform clients of the benefits, risks and options to proposed interventions.
- b) Inform clients in a timely manner of proposed changes to the agreed-upon intervention plan, including the benefits, risks and options.
- c) Respect the clients' right to make choices, consult and request additional information, refuse proposed interventions and withdraw previously provided consent.

- d) Re-visit the client's refusal of proposed interventions as the context of care changes.
- e) Determine services that involve physical contact or closeness and explain processes to client.
- f) Obtain informed consent freely, without coercion or pressure.

Practice Outcome:

Clients can expect a Dietitian to obtain informed consent prior to the provision of professional services.

1.7 Standard

A Dietitian maintains professional boundaries at all times.

Indicators

- a) Maintain professional boundaries with all clients during the provision of services and outside the practice setting.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to maintain professional boundaries at all times.

1.8 Standard

A Dietitian identifies and manages any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Indicators

- a) Identify any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest situations where professional integrity or the provision of services could be interpreted as being compromised.
- b) Manage real, perceived or potential conflict of interest situations by disclosure, recusal and/or discontinuation of the professional service.
- c) Provide options for the sale of dietetic products.
- d) Promote only services and products that are supported by reliable, non-biased evidence.
- e) Refrain from accepting fees, gifts or other benefits from product or service sponsors or from offering similar benefits to clients for purchasing products or services.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to provide professional services that are in their best interests and to disclose any conflict of interest and provide options.

Standard Area 2: Communication and Collaboration

2.1 Standard

A Dietitian communicates in a clear, concise and respectful manner.

Indicators

- a) Select communication styles to maximize clarity and facilitate understanding.
- b) Speak clearly, concisely and respectfully, using an appropriate tone of voice and body language.
- c) Encourage effective oral communication through active listening, clarification, questions and open responses.
- d) Adapt communications to the clients' level of understanding and cultural/ language needs, incorporating supports as needed to reduce comprehension barriers (interpreters, visual aids, etc).
- e) Write client/group education materials in an organized manner, using plain language.
- f) Counsel/provide information to individuals/ clients/ groups using appropriate teaching/ learning strategies and open communication.
- g) Maintain personal and professional integrity when communicating via social media.
- h) Demonstrate cultural awareness & competence.
- i) Use principles of facilitation, negotiation and conflict management as needed, showing respect for others' viewpoints.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to communicate clearly, concisely, in a respectful manner.

2.2 Standard

A Dietitian contributes to the provision of quality professional services as a member of the clients' interprofessional team.

Indicators

- a) Contribute professional knowledge to discussions and interactions with team members using an open, collaborative approach.
- b) Explain professional scope of practice, roles and responsibilities and seek similar information from team members.
- c) Recognize and respect overlapping scopes of practice and other team members' education and experience.
- d) Engage with team members to plan, coordinate and deliver quality professional services.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect a Dietitian to actively contribute as a member of the client's interprofessional team for the provision of quality professional services.

2.3 Standard

A Dietitian provides professional services concurrently with another provider from the same or a different profession only when the concurrent provision of services is beneficial to the client.

Indicators

- a) Determine the nature of any concurrent professional services, communicating with the other service provider(s) as needed.
- b) Communicate benefits and risks of concurrent services to the client.
- c) Determine when the concurrent provision of professional services is not in the client's best interest and explain to the client why professional services are being discontinued.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect to be informed of the benefits and risks of concurrent practice and, if continuation of professional services is not in the clients' best interest, to be informed of reasons for discontinuation.

Standard Area 3: Client-centered Services

3.1 Standard

A Dietitian provides quality professional services that reflect the unique needs, goals, values and circumstances of the client.

Indicators

- a) Provide quality professional services regardless of the client's ancestry, nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, gender, social and marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs or physical or mental ability.
- b) Involve client in decision making where the client may accept, revise or decline proposed care.
- c) Provide the best service possible within available resources.
- d) Provide services that are in the client's best interests.
- e) Monitor client outcomes and adapt the service plan as clients' needs change.
- f) Arrange for the transfer of clients, as applicable, when leaving a practice position.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect the Dietitian to respect clients' unique characteristics and provide quality professional services in a respectful manner.

3.2 Standard

A Dietitian seeks information and incorporates an evidence-informed approach to their practice.

Indicators

- a) Obtain comprehensive and current client information/evidence.
- b) Assess/ interpret clients' information/ evidence, considering contextual factors, ethics and client perspectives.
- c) Incorporate clients' information/evidence into service delivery plan.
- d) Evaluate the impact of evidence-informed practices on client outcomes and quality services.

- e) Communicate and explain evidence-informed and best practice information to clients, colleagues and groups.
- f) Contribute to new knowledge by participating in practice-based formal or informal research, conforming to applicable ethical guidelines and processes.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect the Dietitian to seek and interpret applicable information and use an evidence-informed approach to provide services that are in the clients' best interests.

3.3 Standard

A Dietitian uses critical thinking to obtain assessment data, determine practice problems, and plan, implement and evaluate professional services.

Indicators

- a) Perform assessment procedures within scope of practice and level of knowledge and competence.
- b) Determine and obtain additional assessment data as required, including input from the client, clients' interprofessional team members, family, stakeholders, etc.
- c) Analyze/interpret data using critical thinking, professional judgement and best practice knowledge.
- d) Identify practice problems and determine priorities.
- e) Plan evidence-informed services, strategies and education that reflect the clients' needs, goals and values and are in the clients' best interest.
- f) Implement planned services in a safe and effective manner, communicating with clients and coordinating with team members.
- g) Identify strategies and timelines to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of services provided.
- h) Adjust service plan to reflect changing needs of the client and practice context.
- i) Consult with or refer the client to another regulated health professional or appropriately qualified individual as needed/ appropriate.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect the Dietitian to appropriately and effectively obtain assessment data, determine practice problems and plan, implement and evaluate professional services that are in the clients' best interest.

3.4 Standard

A Dietitian maintains clear and accurate records that document communications and the provision of professional services.

Indicators

- a) Prepare, maintain and manage records in compliance with legislative requirements, regulatory policies/ guidelines and organizational requirements.
- b) Document relevant information clearly, concisely and accurately, using terminology and abbreviations recognized and considered best practice by the organization and the profession.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect the Dietitian to document communications and professional services in a clear, accurate and timely manner.

Standard Area 4.0: Leadership, Organization & Service Delivery

4.1 Standard

A Dietitian leads and organizes effective delivery of services.

Indicators

- a) Use strategic and operational planning principles and principles of management for the provision of services.
- b) Incorporate principles of financial management relevant to the organization, including cost awareness and service delivery budgeting, fees and payment arrangements.
- c) Use relevant technology/equipment to support the provision of services.
- d) Incorporate risk management strategies into the assessment, problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation phases of service provision.
- e) Incorporate continuous quality improvement activities/ programs to promote the effectiveness of service provision.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect to receive effective services.

4.2 Standard

A Dietitian who promotes their own or organizational services through media communicates messages in a professional and accurate manner.

Indicators

- a) Comply with legislation and regulatory policies/guidelines relating to the promotion of products and services.
- b) Ensure advertising and promotional communications are factual and accurate.
- c) Promote services in a professional manner regardless of the promotional medium (paper, electronic, web-based, social media, etc), keeping a copy of all advertising for one year after the date of publication or broadcast as a copy maybe requested by the registrar, the discipline committee or the board upon request.

Practice Outcome

Clients can expect marketing/promotional communications to be professional, accurate and ethical, and to meet legislation and regulatory policies/guidelines.

The Newfoundland & Labrador College of Dietitians (NLCD) acknowledges the College of Dietitians of British Columbia (CDBC) in the development of this document. NLCD has adapted CDBC document in accordance with legislation and polices.

Resources

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3. College of Dietitians of Alberta, Standards of Practice and Essential Competencies for Dietetic Practice, April 2008.
4. College of Dietitians of BC, Standards of Practice, Indicators and Guidelines, March 2012.
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6. Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEPs), Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP), version (2), April 2013.
7. The Personal Health Information Act. Retrieved on June 14, 2016:
<http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/phia/>
8. Access to Information & Protection of Privacy Act. Retrieved on June 14, 2016:
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