



## PRESIDENT'S Message

It has been a busy but rewarding first quarter! There is a great deal of exciting work to accomplish as we transition to a College. When our Act comes into effect, the College is legislated by law to oversee four main tasks of self regulation. Some of these items were already being done by NSDA and some are new.

Registration - entry to practice exam - title & practice protection - credentials & competency assessment	Professional Conduct - complaints - investigations - hearings
Professional Practice - standards of practice - code of ethics - position statements - practice guidelines	Continuing Competency - establishing & enforcing standards - maintaining & monitoring competency

With regards to continuing competency, there will be a higher expectation for reporting and auditing due to risk of harm of the new scope and stakeholder scrutiny of College processes.

The adhoc Professional Practice Committee has worked tirelessly since last fall gathering and evaluating research from Colleges across the county to put forth best practice recommendations. These include:

1. A new Continuing Competency Program. This program will include reflective learning, self assessment, a portfolio and evidence of competency to perform specialized interventions. This new tool will recognize various formal and informal learning, mentoring and specialized activities.
2. There will be a requirement for every dietitian to declare to the College when there is a change in practice. This will be another method to ensure learning activities are documented to ensure competency in this new area.
3. Implement a jurisprudence survey. This is best practice in regulation and is a tool to assist member understanding of provincial legislation relevant to dietetic practice, ethical decision making, etc.

*Continued on page 2*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** *(continued...)*

4. Annual declaration of hours practiced
5. Endorsement of practice standards, guidelines, policies and position statements which will assist dietitians in defining their scope of practice.

The Quality Assurance Committee is currently in place and anyone who is interested in assisting with the development of these recommendations should contact Jennifer Garus at [nsda@ns.aliantzinc.ca](mailto:nsda@ns.aliantzinc.ca). As these recommendations evolve, more information will be communicated to you through the website and the annual general meeting.

Our transition into the work of a college has also lead the Board to create an organizational mission, vision and value statements for NSDA. On behalf of the Board of Directors I am pleased to share these with you.

We hope to see you at the annual general meeting in May!

Darlene Bogers, NSDA President

**Our Mission:** The College effectively regulates dietetic practice in the interest of Nova Scotians.

**Our Vision:** We are an innovative, trusted and effective regulator that models collaborative leadership to create a culture of excellence which embraces and supports a dynamic scope of practice and the professional expertise of dietitians and nutritionists in their fields of practice.

**Our Key Values:** innovation, trust, effectiveness,

**Our Value Statements**

*Innovation* - We strive to be a future oriented organization that embraces change through creativity and strategic thinking.

*Trust* - We are committed to building public and stakeholder trust through effective regulation and collaborative relationships.

*Effectiveness* - We are committed to achieving our stated goals of regulating safe and ethical dietetic practice in Nova Scotia.

*Integrity* - We are committed to act in an ethical, fair, transparent, respectful and honest manner.

*Responsiveness* - We strive to be accessible and visible to those we serve

*Accountability* - We are accountable to provide effective regulation to ensure safe and thriving dietetic practice in Nova Scotia.

*Life Long Learning* - We are committed to the continuous building of skills and knowledge through innovative competence plans to enhance development and growth as a profession.

## EXECUTIVE MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Self-regulation is often referred to as a privilege rather than a **right**. **Over three years in the role of executive manager I've** come to fully appreciate the significance of this statement. As we wait for our Act to come into effect, it's timely to recognize this aspect of becoming a college.

Through the *Dietitian's Act* and its regulations, society relies on the dietetic profession to regulate itself. Think of our ability to regulate ourselves as a contract with the Nova Scotia public. If a profession cannot protect the public from harm caused by **incompetent practice, then government, on the public's behalf,** can review the decision to grant self-governance to the

profession and remove it. Government would then set education and practice standards and discipline practitioners. In a previous Telehealth session, our legal counsel, Marjorie Hickey, described the national and global evolution of self-regulation. Self-regulation is changing due, in part, to the perception that regulatory bodies have not been able to differentiate public from self-interest. In some other provinces and countries, there has been increased government oversight over professional regulation.

At a recent conference of the Nova Scotia Health Professions Regulatory Network, *Interprofessional Collaboration: An Exploration of Possibilities*, it was noted that self-regulation in Nova Scotia **is only as strong as its weakest link**. **Health professions' colleges come in varying sizes and capacities,** but their mandates and responsibilities are the same. Nova Scotia regulatory bodies are currently identifying opportunities for collaboration that are in-line with the college mandate.

You only need to read a few public forums on news sites to see the public's increased scepticism and expectations of regulators. And you only need to listen to the news to hear the outcomes of hearings that result from the public's increased likelihood to lodge a complaint to a college about their health professional. For over ten years, NSDA has functioned solely as a regulatory body and has registration and quality assurance processes that reflect best practice. When our Act is proclaimed and the public recognizes our organization as a college, we might also expect to address complaints. The public and members can be assured that the new Act's complaints and hearing processes are objective, fair and current.

"Self-regulation is often referred to as a privilege rather than a right."

The Board recently drafted vision, mission, and value statements. In doing so, considerable time was spent differentiating what a regulatory body can and cannot do (see page 7). A regulatory **body's paramount** objective is to function in the public interest. That's not to say that its processes wouldn't also serve to support and advance dietetic practice. As you reflect on the Board's draft mission, vision, and value statements, keep in mind that the college's paramount objective is public safety, and that self-regulation is a privilege.

Jennifer Garus, Executive Manager

## 2011 Education day & Annual General Meeting

Friday, May 13, 2011

Future Inn Hotel & conference Centre

30 Fairfax Drive, Halifax

### Agenda

8:30 - 9 a.m. Registration and Welcome

9 - 9:30 a.m. *Regulating Dietetic Practice*  
Jennifer Garus, NSDA Executive Manager

As NSDA transitions to a college and as we await approval of Dietitians Regulations, preparations are underway to develop standards to assist in the regulation of Nova Scotia's dietetic scope of practice. Like pharmacists and nurse practitioners, RDs will also be authorized to prescribe. According to the new Dietitian's Act, dietetic practice will include "... nutrition prescription, including enteral and parenteral nutrition and the prescription or ordering of drugs or other agents to optimize nutrition status." Regulations and standards will set the expectations and requirements of RDs when prescribing to ensure optimal patient care and safety.

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. *The Development of the Standards of Practice for Prescribing of Drugs by Pharmacists*  
Shelagh Campbell-Palmer, Manager of Professional Practice  
Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists

As of January 2010, Pharmacist Drug Prescribing Regulations were approved by the provincial government giving pharmacists authority to prescribe for certain minor health conditions and under certain circumstances. Standards establish the clear accountabilities and responsibilities of pharmacists with respect to the prescribing of drugs. The presentation will provide an overview of the standards development process and the prescription standards for pharmacists to follow when prescribing medications.

10:30 - 11 a.m. Break

11 - 12 p.m. *Regulating Dietetic Practice*  
Darlene Bogers, NSDA President & Chair of the Ad Hoc Professional Practice Committee

The NSDA board of directors has approved recommendations to regulate dietetic practice, as made by the Ad hoc Professional Practice Committee.

*continued on page 5 ...*

12 - 12:30 p.m.	Judy Jenkins, Executive Director, Atlantic Region Dietitians of Canada Update
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Annual General Meeting

To register for the 2011 Education Day & Annual General Meeting, email or call NSDA. There is no cost to attend and lunch will be provided. Please register by May 6th by calling (902) 835-0253 or email at [nsda@ns.aliantzinc.ca](mailto:nsda@ns.aliantzinc.ca)

## YOU ASKED ...

### Practice Q&A

**Q.** As a dietitian consultant in a special care home, I recommended a texture modified diet for a resident due to swallowing difficulties after a series of TIAs. The resident refuses to eat the modified diet and consistently requests a regular texture. I have explained the risks of a regular diet to the resident, have discussed the issue with the care team, and have extensively documented his refusal. Is it acceptable to provide the regular diet despite significant risk of aspiration and choking?

**A.** In order to provide the modified diet, the resident must consent to treatment. It is apparent that the resident has not provided consent to treatment. You have not mentioned whether you have considered his capacity to make the decision or whether family members were involved in the decision-making process. When a client is incapable to provide informed consent, the dietitian should obtain consent from a substitute decision maker. The *Personal Directives Act* (2010) addresses capacity and consent issues related to personal care (including health care, nutrition and hydration). Information for health professionals pertaining to this Act can be found at the following link: [www.gov.ns.ca/just/pda/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/pda/)



*continued on page 6 ...*

## Practice Q&A (*continued...*)

**Q.** As a dietitian in private practice, I offer a risk assessments to my clients. The cardiovascular disease and diabetes risk assessments include a skin-prick test to assess blood glucose and cholesterol levels. I also manually check their blood pressure which I have been trained to perform. I make it clear to the client that I am not providing a diagnosis. I consistently recommend that my client discuss the risk assessment results with their physician or nurse practitioner. I realize that **this risk assessment isn't traditionally within a dietitian's role. Am I permitted to perform this risk assessment?**

**A.** In Nova Scotia, skin-prick tests and measuring blood pressure are activities of public domain. In other words, you do not have to be a regulated health care professional to perform these activities. There is a professional obligation to recognize the potential harm of conducting these activities and be competent to perform the activities safely and effectively. In the event of a complaint against a **dietitian, the dietitian would be subject to a regulatory body's investigation and/or be subject to legal action (e.g. be sued by the client). Care should be taken to document the education and training you've had to perform these activities (e.g. maintain a professional portfolio).** You might also seek a mentor or colleague to validate your ability in performing the activity.



**Q.** As a dietitian registered with NSDA and a member of Dietitians of Canada, I'm confused about how the codes of ethics of both organizations differ.

**A.** *NSDA's Code of Ethics for Professional Dietitians (2007)* outlines the minimum ethical requirements that an NSDA member must adhere. The Code includes responsibility statements. These are detailed, specific rules of ethical behaviour because they serve as a minimum legal standard. They describe behaviour that is considered right and are detailed in order to be upheld in a legal proceeding. **In contrast to a regulatory body's code, an association's code tends to be less specific and outlines general principles of ethical responsibilities.** Both codes serve to build public trust, promote the integrity of the profession, help dietitians work through ethical dilemmas, and provoke self-reflection in practice.

## December 2010 Board Retreat:

### Identifying the Role of a Regulatory Body

Board members identified potential roles of a college and classified the roles as being, or not being, a role of a college.

The roles of a college include:

- Protecting the RD scope and title
- Enforcing a regulatory code of ethics
- Educating the public about the profession
- Serving and protecting the public
- Educating registrants about professional practice issues
- Educating the public and others about the RD scope and protected titles
- Enforcing a competency program
- Enforcing standards
- Promoting the profession in the public interest

The roles of a college do *not* include:

- Sitting on health region committees that discuss human resources
- Advocating to employers on the evidence to hire more RDs in their organization
- Providing continuing education workshops on clinical topics
- Fundraising
- Accepting sponsorship
- Advocating for dietetic resources at the DHA level (not if self-serving)
- Intervening with regards to RD job losses
- Promoting individual RDs in private practice

Nova Scotia Dietetic Association  
212-1496 Bedford Highway  
Bedford, NS B4A 1E5  
Phone: (902) 835-0253 Fax: (902) 835-0523  
nsda@ns.aliantzinc.ca  
www.nsdassoc.ca