

July 31, 2014

To my fellow Academy members:

At the FNCE Opening Session in 2010, then Academy President Judith Rodriguez, PhD, RD, LDN, FADA, announced a need for a certification option for baccalaureate degree graduates who meet Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) requirements. A certification would respond to the demand for increased consumer access to credible food and nutrition information and would allow DPD graduates, who have completed an Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)-accredited program to remain connected to our profession.

In July 2013, the Board approved the Nutrition and Dietetics Associate (NDA) designation. Since then, the NDA and associated issues have generated many discussions. Recently, the Board of Directors appointed a Task Force to look more closely at moving to multi-levels of practice, and Academy members were asked for comments and recommendations. We were delighted that hundreds of members offered thoughtful, passionate remarks on all sides of the issue. Thank you to all members who provided feedback. We assure you that your voices were heard and your viewpoints were considered.

The Task Force reviewed all the information surrounding the NDA designation, including:

- Comments from educators, employers, practitioners and students dating back to 2010
- The Academy's ongoing need to proactively and strategically position the nutrition and dietetics profession in the marketplace now and in the future
- The fact that individuals with a baccalaureate degree are qualified for licensure/certification in 30 states if they complete a licensure board approved supervised practice/work experience and examination. These states do not require completion of ACEND-accredited academic programs or ACEND-accredited supervised practice.
- Recommendations from the 2012 Visioning Report and related House of Delegates (HOD) dialogue
- Recommendations from the Individualized Supervised Practice Pathways Workgroup
- ACEND, Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) and Council on Future Practice documents
- Data analysis from Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) area meetings and member polls
- HOD portal postings, member emails
- Feedback to the online Change Management matrix for five key constituent groups (RDNs, DTRs, DPD graduates, employers and public/consumers).

The Board accepted the Task Force recommendation that builds upon the existing DTR Pathway III and differentiates between degree levels to obtain the credential Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (PhD, MS, BS or AS-NDTR). This recommendation follows the nursing model (the RN examination is open to AS-, BS-, and MS-prepared individuals). Individuals who have earned the DTR credential could choose to retain this designation or adopt the NDTR; those with the four year degree likewise could choose BS-DTR or BS-NDTR.

The Board believes this decision takes into account thoughtful member feedback and provides several advantages, including:

- Maintaining the integrity of current professional designations (RDN, RD, NDTR, DTR)
- Providing a timely opportunity for eligible DPD graduates to become certified and to remain connected to the Academy
- Allowing the Academy to collect and analyze data on the utilization and practice implications of the enhanced DTR Pathway III, and making evidence-based decisions on what, if any, changes are needed.

[DTR Pathway III](#) requires “Completion of a Baccalaureate degree granted by a U.S. regionally accredited college/university, or foreign equivalent, and completion of an ACEND DPD.” After successfully passing the NDTR exam, credentialed individuals will be required to comply with CDR recertification requirements, the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics and the Standards of Practice. In 2015, CDR will conduct a practice audit to differentiate practice parameters of NDTRs (DTRs) and RDNs. The results will provide valuable information about evolving practice roles to inform future deliberations on title, practice role and examination for NDTRs.

More information on the NDTR credential will be made available as it is developed. All members and students who are interested in the NDTR credential should visit <http://www.cdrnet.org/certifications/registration-eligibility-requirements-for-dietetic-technicians>.

Thank you again to all members who made their voices heard during the past several weeks. As a Board, we are committed to listening to you and carefully examining every issue as we continue to move the profession forward. We can only do that as members passionately engage in providing feedback, responding to calls for action and volunteering their time to continue to tackle the challenges that arise, including our current preceptor shortage. Working together we can help ensure the public has access to credible food and nutrition guidance from our credentialed practitioners.

Sincerely,
On behalf of the 2014-2015 Academy Board of Directors

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