

Bill #47

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**Law Amendments Committee**

*Dietitians Act*

**Bill No. 47**

**October 29, 2009**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the proposed *Dietitians Act (Bill No. 47)*, introduced to the Fall House of Assembly 2009. The College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia was consulted during the process of preparing the *Dietitians Act*, and as nothing within the proposed Act places any restrictions on the practice of registered nurses or nurse practitioners we fully support this legislation. In addition, we see many potential benefits to the public, to the larger healthcare system being served, and to the profession itself.

Dietitians with their specific scientific knowledge of food and nutrition provide a unique service to the public and are essential members of the healthcare team.

The definition of the scope of practice contained in the *Dietitians Act* will enable dietitians to work to an optimized scope of practice. This, in turn, will maximize the ability of dietitians to meet the changing needs of patients and families, and enhance their role within collaborative healthcare teams. It will also provide further clarity of the role of dietitians for the public and other health professions.

Another benefit noted within this legislation is the title protection for dietitians. Title protection is essential to protect the public by ensuring that those who are legally permitted (licensed) to use a specific title have the necessary education, training, experience and competence.

The proposed *Dietitians Act* also provides for modernization of the profession's regulatory processes through the establishment of a professional regulatory college. This legislation modernizes many components of self-regulation for dietitians: from requirements for licensure for all practitioners, to professional conduct management and continuing competence requirements.

The College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia was the first legislated nursing body established in Canada, in 1910, and today regulates the practice of 9600 registered nurses, including nurse practitioners. As we head toward our Centennial year of 2010, it is an honour to be able to support proposed legislative changes that will enable the profession of dietetics to modernize their regulatory processes and introduce quality improvements in its services and programs in the public interest.

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