

June 5, 2014

To: Senator Rocca and Members of the Senate Committee on Regulatory Reform

From: Ann Hoffman, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Certified Diabetes Educator (RDN, CDE) , Clinical Dietitian, Covenant HealthCare, Saginaw; Past President, Michigan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Good afternoon. My name is Ann Hoffman and I live in Saginaw. I am Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and a Certified Diabetes Educator at Covenant HealthCare. As a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, I am responsible for Medical Nutrition Therapy for patients in an outpatient cancer care center, a radiation oncology center and a diabetes self-management center. Additionally, I assess and educate patients enrolled in both cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation programs and I work with the eating disorder population. In addition to the hospital and clinic setting, I described, Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, in Michigan, provide care in many settings, such as long term care, community health, research, food science and technology, education and private practice.

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists are credentialed through the Commission on Dietetic Registration, the credentialing agency of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. To obtain the RDN credential, one must complete 100 semester hours of science, nutrition, statistics, and food science coursework, with a minimum of 40 semester hours in nutrition coursework. Coursework includes food and nutrition sciences, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, anatomy, chemistry, food science systems, business, pharmacology, culinary arts, behavioral sciences and communication. Additionally, 1200 hours of supervised practice, through an accredited dietetic internship, is required, as well as successful completion of a national registration examination. It is important to note that the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist's practice focuses on standards of care that are built on a foundation of evidenced-based science.

Maintaining licensure of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists is necessary to ensure the protection of citizens, and to enable them to be able to identify the "highly qualified" practitioner when treating chronic and serious disease and to help identify the expert, specialized nutrition services provider. Maintaining licensure provides the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist the authority to practice MNT, and at the same time and even more importantly, it prevents those who are unqualified from doing so. Many other professionals may call themselves nutritionists, but if they have not participated in the rigorous training that is required to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, they are putting the public at risk for physical, psychological and financial harm. For instance, there is a lot of overlap among the members of the health care team. I see it every day with the cancer patients I serve. I may give advice to reinforce the RNs instruction re: the importance of drinking fluids after chemotherapy and the appropriateness of taking anti-nausea medications, but I wouldn't override the RNs medication instructions, which are based on the physician's order, just as it would be obvious that it wouldn't be appropriate for me to start the patients' IV. The RNs, I work with, function within their scope of practice, and leave the provision of medical nutrition therapy to me. They know that I have the training, and science-based knowledge to correctly guide to the patient's nutritional care.

It is important to remember that Registered Dietitian Nutritionists are the nutrition professionals recognized as the single identifiable group of health professionals, with standardized education, clinical training, continuing education and national credentialing requirements necessary to be directly reimbursed as a provider of nutrition therapy. I urge you maintain licensure for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists by opposing House Bill 4688.

Thank you for your time.