

Dietitian and Nutritionist Licensure: Key Talking Points

The California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is exploring the feasibility of licensing the provision of medical nutrition therapy in California.

AIM OF LICENSURE

Modernize state law to establish licensure for qualified dietetics and nutrition professionals; align scope of practice with training and competency; narrowly license the practice of medical nutrition therapy (MNT) as a recognized component of medical care; and expand access to quality, evidence-based nutrition care.

LICENSURE WILL:

- **License all qualified dietetics and nutrition practitioners:** Establish two licensure pathways, one for dietitians and one for nutritionists, aligning qualifications and scope of practice with demonstrated knowledge, skills, and competency
- **Focus on risk of harm:** Limit the requirement for a license to MNT—the use of nutrition care to manage or treat diseases and medical conditions—because this service can cause serious harm if delivered by an unqualified or incompetent provider
- **Align CA with Medicare regulations:** Support therapeutic diet order writing by qualified providers in hospitals and long-term care facilities, enhancing access to timely, cost-effective nutrition care
- **Expand access:** Support payers (e.g. Medicaid, insurance) in identifying and credentialing qualified providers of nutrition services, increasing access to MNT and reducing out-of-pocket costs for consumers
- **Preserve consumer choice of wellness providers:** Allow unlicensed individuals, (e.g., trainers, health coaches) to provide non-MNT services, including:
 - Individualized nutrition guidance for wellness and primary chronic disease prevention
 - Health coaching and behavior-change support
 - Holistic/wellness education, motivation, and general guidance
 - Nonmedical weight management

LICENSURE WILL NOT:

- Prevent other licensed professionals from providing MNT within their own scope of practice
- Prohibit trainers, coaches, or wellness professionals from offering nutrition advice or services that do not constitute MNT (i.e., nonmedical wellness and prevention guidance)
- Restrict the sharing of information related to the marketing or distribution of foods, herbs, dietary supplements, or food materials

ABOUT US

The California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is an affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. Visit the California Academy website at: dietitian.org.