

PART II

The Present



The Dietetics Profession

“To benefit as many as possible” appeared on the seal of the American Dietetic Association (and is still in use today on the seal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics). It is an even more relevant goal of the profession today than it was in 1940 when it was first adopted. The scope of professional practice is continuously widening, and the knowledge base of nutrition is deepening. Since that first meeting in Cleveland in 1917, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has grown to be the largest food and nutrition organization in the world. This growth has occurred because of members who are willing to seize and/or create opportunities and who have solid educational foundations that are diverse enough to allow practice in a myriad of areas.

What is dietetics? What makes it a profession? Who are today’s dietitians? Where do they work, and what do they do? What kind of compensation and benefits do they enjoy in their positions, and what are some of the issues facing the profession today? These are the questions that are addressed in this chapter (Figure 2–1).



FIGURE 2–1 Just what is dietetics?

What Is Dietetics?

At the center of the professional association seal, adopted in 1940, are images representing the three main characteristics of the profession: a balance, representing science as the foundation of dietetics; a caduceus, representing the close relationship between dietetics and medicine; and a cooking vessel, representing cooking and food preparation. Surrounding this is a shaft of wheat, representing bread as the staff of life; acanthus leaves, representing growth and life; and a cornucopia, representing an abundant food supply. The name of the association and its founding date in Roman numerals are printed around the edge. The seal appears on registration certificates for registered dietitians and for registered dietetic technicians and on the gold member pin. Consider the following definitions of *dietetics*:

- “The scientific study of food preparation and intake.”¹
- “The science of applying nutritional principles to the planning and preparation of foods and regulation of the diet in relation to both health and disease.”²

These definitions are woefully inadequate for what dietetics has grown to become. The basis of dietetics is the firm belief that optimal nutrition is essential for the health and well-being of every person. This is why dietetics is an integral component of the healthcare field. A team effort by doctors, nurses, and dietitians is usually necessary to return a patient to health. However, it is possible that no other profession offers such a diversity of opportunities outside of the traditional healthcare arena as the field of dietetics. Early dietetic practitioners were usually found in an institutional kitchen—for which the dictionary definitions would have been adequate. Today, dietitians can be found almost anywhere. For this reason, a recent survey of dietetics made use of a very broad definition of *dietetics*:

*A dietetics-related position is considered to be any position that requires or makes use of your education, training, and/or experience in dietetics or nutrition, including situations outside of “traditional” dietetics practice.*³

What Is a Profession?

A general definition of a *profession* might be “an occupation for which preliminary training is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and learning as distinguished from mere skill, which is pursued largely for others and not merely for oneself and in which financial return is not an accepted measure of success.”⁴

The Goals Committee of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics interprets a profession as a calling requiring the following:

- Specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation
- Maintenance, by force of organization or concerted opinion, of high standards of achievement and conduct
- Instruction in skills and methods as well as scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods

- Commitment of its members to continued study
- A kind of work that has as its primary purpose the rendering of a public service⁵

A professional is one who represents or belongs to a profession.

How Is Dietetics a Profession?

Five main characteristics of dietetic practice qualify it for professional status:

1. A specialized body of knowledge
2. Specialized services rendered to society
3. An obligation for service to the client that overrides personal considerations
4. Concern for competence and honor among the practitioners
5. An obligation to continuing education, research, and sharing of knowledge for the common good⁶

What Is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist?

A dietitian has been defined as “a professional person who is a translator of the science and art of foods, nutrition, and dietetics in the service of people—whether individually or in families or larger groups; healthy or sick; and at all stages of the life cycle.”⁶

Some titles need to be clarified at this point: *dietitian*; *registered dietitian*; *registered dietitian nutritionist*; *nutritionist*; *licensed dietitian*; *dietetic technician, registered*; and *nutrition and dietetics technician, registered* (Figure 2–2). The title of dietitian usually implies a registered dietitian (RD or RDN). There is no difference between an RD and an RDN. For the sake of simplicity, the acronym RDN will be used throughout this book. An RDN has completed

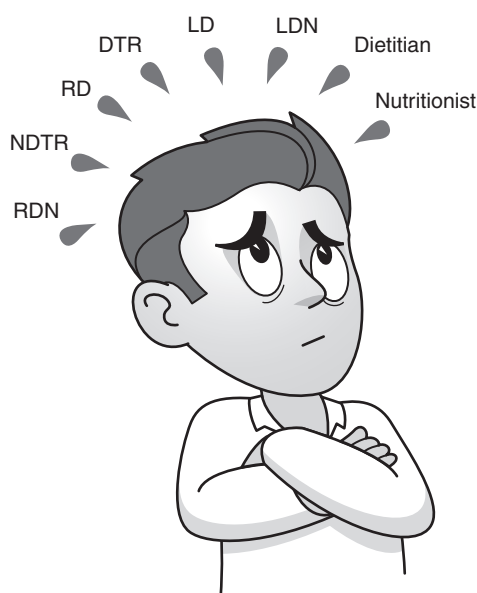


FIGURE 2–2 Titles used in the dietetics profession.

the required academic training and supervised practice program (described in Chapters 5 and 6) and has successfully passed the national credentialing exam. There are no such requirements for the use of the title “nutritionist”; the term has no standards of education or training. This means that anyone can use the title nutritionist with little or no training in the field—and many do. A few states restrict the use of these titles unless the person has completed a certain amount of education and training.⁷

Many states have regulatory laws that either require or permit dietitians to be licensed. A licensed dietitian or licensed dietitian/nutritionist (LD or LDN) is a person who has been licensed by a state to ensure competence. State requirements for licensure are frequently met through the same education, training, and national exam required for RDNs.⁷

Registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) is a nationally recognized title for a nutrition expert. This title reflects the high level of entry-level education and training and the continuing education required to achieve and maintain RDN status. In addition, some RDNs have achieved additional certification in specialized areas of practice, such as pediatric nutrition (CSP, Board Certified Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition), renal nutrition (CSR, Board Certified Specialist in Renal Nutrition), sports nutrition (CSSD, Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics), gerontologic nutrition (CSG, Board Certified Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition), and oncology nutrition (CSO, Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition).⁷

The title *dietetic technician, registered* (DTR) or *nutrition and dietetics technician, registered* (NDTR), like dietitian, implies that the person is a registered dietetic technician or nutrition and dietetics technician. There is no difference between a DTR and an NDTR. For the sake of simplicity, the acronym NDTR will be used throughout this book (Figure 2–3). NDTRs are



FIGURE 2–3 A registered nutrition and dietetics technician (NDTR) at work.
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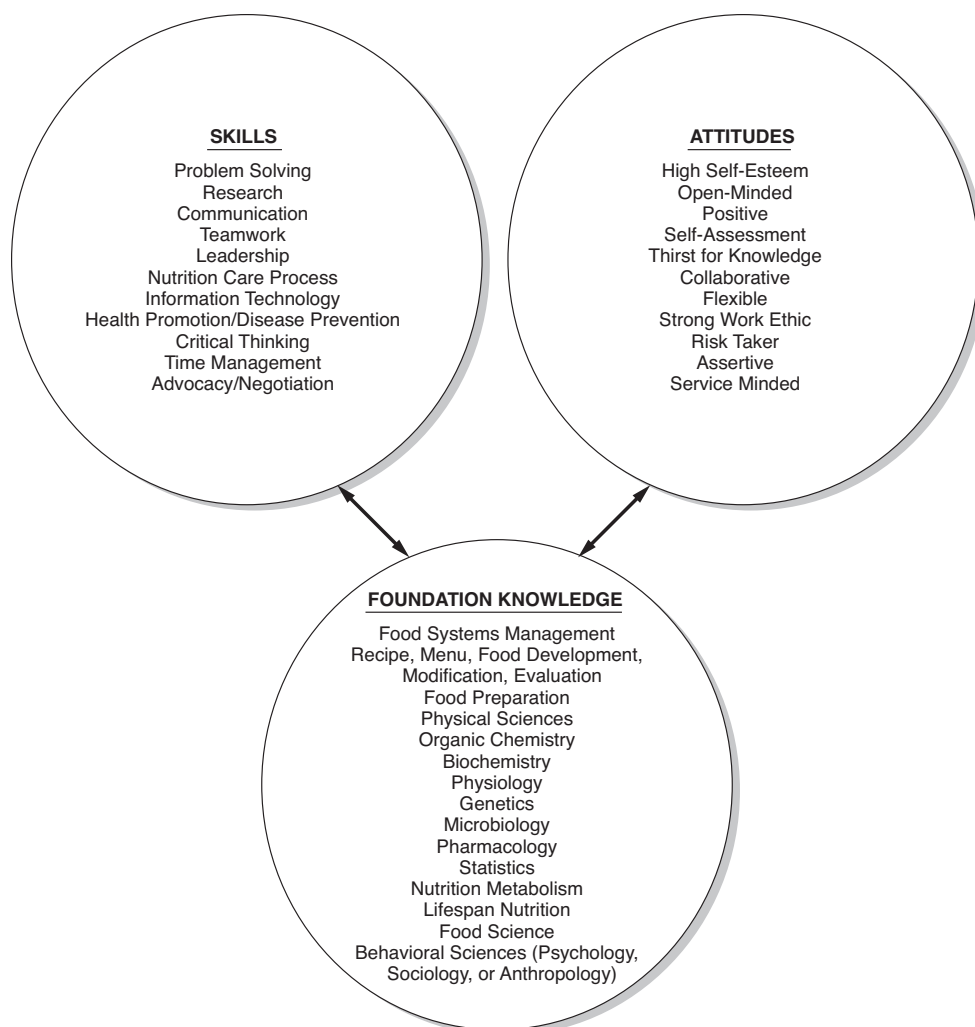


FIGURE 2-4 Model for dietetic practice.

trained in food and nutrition and are an integral part of healthcare and food-service management teams. Like RDNs, NDTRs must complete an academic program and a supervised practice experience and must pass a national written exam in order to use the title.⁷

Dietetic practice is based on the application of principles derived from the integration of knowledge from many disciplines. Successful dietetic practitioners then apply skills and attitudes to translate this knowledge in order to achieve and maintain the health of people. **Figure 2-4** is a graphic depiction of the knowledge areas, skills, and attitudes essential for successful dietetic practice.

Who Are Dietitians?

A recent survey, which included a sample of 9,058 members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, found that 95% of dietetic practitioners are female, with a median age of 46. The field is predominantly white; 9% of

respondents indicated a race other than white, and 4% identified themselves as Hispanic. The median number of years of work experience was 16. Almost all RDNs hold bachelor's degrees, with 47% having a master's degree and 4% a doctorate. Sixty-seven percent of RDNs are members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 44% have a state license, and 21% hold one or more specialty certifications.³

Thirty-nine percent of NDTRs hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and 40% are members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Five percent of NDTRs hold a state license, and 11% hold one or more specialty certifications.³

Where Do Dietitians Work, and What Do They Do?

Dietitians seem to work everywhere and do everything. More specifically, the professional association's 2013 Compensation and Benefit Survey found that the most common employment setting is the hospital: 24% of dietitians and 33% of NDTRs work in a hospital setting. Ten percent of RDNs and 27% of NDTRs work in an extended-care facility, 12% of RDNs and 1% of NDTRs work in a clinic or ambulatory care center, and 7% of RDNs and 8% of NDTRs work in a community or public health program. The remaining practitioners work in a wide variety of other settings (Figure 2–5). Eight percent are self-employed (primarily RDNs), 38% work for a non-profit firm, 30% work for a for-profit company, and 19% work for the government.³

Dietetic practice can be divided into seven key areas: clinical—acute care/inpatient, clinical—ambulatory care, clinical—long-term care, food and nutrition management, community, consultation and business, and education and



FIGURE 2–5 A dietitian who works for a foodservice facility design company.

Courtesy of Christine Guyott, RD

TABLE 2-1**Percentage of Dietitians in the Seven Practice Areas in the Field of Dietetics**

| Practice Area | RDNs | NDTRs |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Clinical nutrition—acute care/ inpatient | 32% | 44% |
| Clinical nutrition—ambulatory care | 17% | 1% |
| Clinical nutrition—long-term care | 8% | 13% |
| Food and nutrition management | 12% | 19% |
| Community | 11% | 11% |
| Consultation and business | 8% | 2% |
| Education and research | 6% | 2% |

NDTRs, nutrition and dietetics technician, registered; RDNs, registered dietitian nutritionist.

Data from: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2013 *Compensation and Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession*. Chicago: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; 2014.

research. Within these seven areas, 40 different job titles account for 80% of all dietetic employment.⁸ The percentage breakdown for those working in these seven practice areas is shown in **Table 2-1**.

The following are the most commonly held position titles in dietetic practice (note that the percentages of the top 12 positions for RDNs and the top 5 for NDTRs are given in parentheses):

Clinical—Acute Care/Inpatient

Dietetic technician, clinical (42%)

Clinical dietitian (16%)

Clinical dietitian, specialist—cardiac

Clinical dietitian, specialist—diabetes

Clinical dietitian, specialist—oncology

Clinical dietitian, specialist—renal

Clinical dietitian, specialist—other

Pediatric/neonatal dietitian (3%)

Nutrition support dietitian (3%)

Clinical—Ambulatory Care

Outpatient dietitian, general (4%)

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—cardiac rehabilitation

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—diabetes (4%)

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—pediatrics

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—renal (3%)

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—weight management

Outpatient dietitian, specialist—other

Home-care dietitian

Clinical—Long-Term Care

Clinical dietitian, long-term care (8%)

Dietetic technician, long-term care (12%)

Food and Nutrition Management

Executive-level professional

Administrative dietitian—patient care

Assistant director of foodservices

Clinical nutrition manager (3%)

Director of food and nutrition services (5% of RDNs and 6% of NDTRs)

School foodservice director

Dietetic technician, foodservice management (10%)

Community

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutritionist (6% of RDNs and 8% of NDTRs)

Cooperative extension educator/specialist

Corrections dietitian

Public health nutritionist (3%)

School/child care nutritionist

Nutrition coordinator for Head Start program

Nutritionist for food bank or assistance program

Consultation and Business

Private practice dietitian—patient/client nutrition care (2%)

Consultant—communications

Sales representative

Consultant—community and/or corporate programs

Public relations and/or marketing professional

Corporate account manager

Corporate dietitian

Director of nutrition

Manager of nutrition communications

Research and development nutritionist

Education and Research

Instructor/lecturer

Assistant or associate professor

Chair, Department of Nutrition and Food Science

Clinical research dietitian

Administrator, higher education

Didactic program director

Dietetic internship director

Professor³

In summary, most RDNs are found in the following settings:

- **Hospitals, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), and other health-care facilities.** RDNs educate patients about nutrition and administer medical nutrition therapy (MNT) as part of the healthcare team. They also manage the foodservice operation, where they oversee everything from food purchasing and preparation to managing the staff (**Figure 2–6**).



FIGURE 2-6 A clinical dietitian.
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- **Schools, day care centers, and correctional facilities.** RDNs manage the foodservice operations, including planning menus, purchasing food, supervising preparation, and directing the staff (**Figure 2-7**).
- **Sports nutrition and corporate wellness programs.** RDNs educate clients about the connections among food, fitness, and health (**Figure 2-8**).



FIGURE 2-7 A dietitian who works in school foodservice and one of her employees.
© Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock



FIGURE 2-8 Two dietitians who work in sports nutrition.
© stockimages/Shutterstock

- **Food- and nutrition-related businesses and industries.** RDNs work in communications, consumer affairs, public relations, marketing, and product development.
- **Private practice.** RDNs work under contract with healthcare or food companies or in their own business. RDNs provide services to restaurant and foodservice managers, food vendors and distributors, athletes, nursing home residents, and company employees.
- **Community and public health settings.** RDNs teach, monitor, advise, and help the public to improve their quality of life through the promotion of healthy eating habits.
- **Universities and medical centers.** RDNs teach physicians, nurses, dietetics students and interns, and others the science of food and nutrition.
- **Research facilities.** RDNs direct and collaborate on experimental research to answer critical questions at food and pharmaceutical companies, universities, and hospitals.⁹

NDTRs may also be found working independently or in teams with RDNs in a variety of work settings, including health care, business and industry, public health, foodservice, and research. NDTRs most commonly work in:

- **Hospitals, HMOs, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, hospices, home healthcare agencies, and research facilities.** NDTRs treat and prevent disease and administer MNT as an important part of the healthcare team.
- **Schools, day care centers, correctional facilities, restaurants, healthcare facilities, corporations, and hospitals.** NDTRs manage foodservice operations, including food purchasing and preparation, supervising employees, and teaching nutrition classes (Figure 2-9).
- **WIC programs, public health agencies, Meals on Wheels, and community health programs.** NDTRs develop and teach nutrition classes for the public.



FIGURE 2-9 An NDTR teaching a nutrition class for preschoolers.
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- **Health clubs, weight-management clinics, and community wellness centers.** NDTRs educate clients about the connections among food, fitness, and health.
- **Food companies, contract food management companies, food vendors, and food distribution companies.** NDTRs develop menus, oversee foodservice sanitation and food safety, and prepare food labeling information and nutrient analysis.⁹

What Is the Salary Range for RDNs and NDTRs?

As is true for most professions, the salary range and fees charged vary by region of the country, employment setting, scope of responsibility, and supply and demand for RDNs. According to the professional association's 2013 Compensation and Benefits Survey, the median annual income in the United States for dietitians who have been working at least 1 year is \$61,000, and for NDTRs who have been working in a position for at least 1 year, it is \$40,000.³ The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014 data found the median salary for RDNs was \$57,000 and the median salary for NDTRs was \$26,000. It is unclear why these discrepancies exist.

The statistics generated by the survey from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics show that the dietitian's salary increases as the number of years in the field increases, as the number of years in the position increases, as higher graduate degrees are held, as the level and scope of responsibility increase, as the size of the budget that is managed increases, as the size of the employing organization increases, and as the number of people being supervised increases.³

Two other factors have an influence on salary—the area of practice and the area of the country. The highest paying practice areas are food and nutrition management, consultation and business, and education and research.

The lowest paying areas are in clinical and community nutrition practice. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the highest salaries were found in California, Maryland, Nevada, Connecticut, and New Jersey. The top-paying metropolitan areas were all in California:

- San Francisco Bay Area
- Oakland
- Vallejo
- Salinas

In addition to pay, fringe benefits are an important employment consideration. When compared with benefits of other professional technical employees in private industry, dietetic professionals' benefits are very favorable. The percentage of practitioners offered various benefits is shown in Table 2-2.

TABLE 2-2**Benefits Offered to Dietetics Professionals**

| Benefit | % of Employers Offering Benefit |
|--|--|
| Paid vacation, personal time off | 82 |
| Paid holidays | 72 |
| Paid sick days | 68 |
| Medical insurance, high deductible | 54 |
| Medical insurance, lower deductible | 66 |
| Dental insurance or group plan | 81 |
| Prescription drug benefit | 73 |
| Vision insurance or group plan | 75 |
| Life insurance | 78 |
| Disability insurance (long- and/or short-term) | 74 |
| Defined contribution retirement plan | 72 |
| Defined benefit retirement plan (pension) | 25 |
| Stock options | 8 |
| Profit sharing | 8 |
| Funding for professional development | 55 |
| Professional society dues | 20 |
| College tuition assistance | 46 |
| Employee assistance or wellness program | 53 |
| Comptime or flextime | 32 |
| Fitness benefit | 42 |
| Extended and/or paid parental leave | 40 |
| On-site child care or allowance | 10 |
| Telecommuting | 13 |

Data from: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. 2013 Compensation and Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession. Chicago: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; 2014.

Specialty Areas and New Employment Opportunities

The dietetic profession is committed to helping people enjoy healthy lives. Therefore, five critical health areas confronting Americans have become priorities for the dietetics profession: (1) obesity and overweight, (2) aging, (3) complementary care and dietary supplements, (4) safe and nutritious food supply, and (5) human genome and genetics. Opportunities abound in these areas, as they do in the less traditional dietetic careers.⁹

As mentioned earlier, dietitians can be found working most anywhere. Consider the following nutrition-related employment opportunities that have not been mentioned previously:

- Attorney
- Author
- Chef (**Figure 2–10**)
- Educational representative for business
- Extension service 4-H coordinator
- Extension service home advisor
- Food advertising consultant
- Food analyst/technologist
- Food broker
- Food editor
- Food journalist
- Food photography specialist
- Food quality assurance specialist
- Food research and marketing specialist
- Food science educator
- Food scientist
- Foodservice administrator for airline or cruise line



FIGURE 2–10 A dietitian who is a chef teaching a healthy cooking class.

© Syda Productions/Shutterstock

Foodservice equipment specialist
Food stylist
Freelance writer
Home economist for food, equipment, or utility business
Job listing and placement service executive
Marketing specialist for a food or nutrition company
Media spokesperson
Motivational speaker
Peace Corps representative
Product development researcher
Publisher
Rehabilitation consultant
Research chemist (Figure 2–11)
Restaurant owner
Taste panel coordinator
Test kitchen scientist

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it shows the breadth of opportunities available to someone who has training in food and nutrition. The educational requirements for these positions vary from some college work to an advanced degree. Many do not require any credential, but some do. Some require additional training and/or education other than an advanced degree.



FIGURE 2–11 A dietitian/professor conducting research.
Courtesy of Susan Helm, PhD, RDN, Pepperdine University

What Are Some of the Issues Facing Dietetic Practice?

This is an exciting time to be a nutrition professional. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of nutritionist dietitians is projected to grow 21% from 2012 to 2022. This is faster than the average of all occupations. The role of food in preventing and treating diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, is now well known. The understanding that lifestyle choices, such as diet and exercise, can make a dramatic difference in quality of life is now widespread. People are eager for information that can give them an edge in competitive sports, improve their appearance, make them feel better, and help them live longer, more productive lives. The knowledge that what we eat can dramatically affect our health will create a demand for those who can provide this information. Everybody needs us! Obesity is a worldwide health issue. A government-sponsored research study recently showed that the annual healthcare cost of obesity in the United States has doubled in less than a decade and may be as high as \$147 billion a year.¹⁰ Many people do not even know how to cook. In addition, the demand for quality control and reliability in the food industry is increasing.

Job growth in health care continues to be strong. The health-related professions have not suffered from the recent recession because of the aging of the U.S. population and increases in the number and type of available treatments. According to one expert, “While fast-food and customer-service may churn out a greater total volume of new jobs, those in health care are almost as plentiful and offer better pay, prospects, and benefits, plus the stability of a nearly recession-proof industry.”¹¹ Over the next several years, job growth in health care is expected to be twice that of other industries. A number of factors account for this growth. The “graying of America” will create the need for more specialized medical care, home health care, and geriatric specialists. The increasing focus on wellness and preventive medicine by HMOs and by the public at large has also contributed to the expansion of the healthcare field.

The three fastest-growing career fields are health care, computers, and education. Dietetic practitioners are widely employed in each of these fields. Jobs that require a bachelor’s degree or higher will grow at a rate almost double that of jobs that require only a high school diploma. Specific to the area of dietetics and nutrition, job growth will result from an increasing emphasis on disease prevention through improved dietary habits. The growing aging population will boost demand for nutritional counseling in hospitals, residential care facilities, schools, prisons, community health programs, and home healthcare agencies. The public’s growing interest in nutrition, health education, and a prudent lifestyle will increase demand, especially in foodservice management. In addition, the increased prevalence and awareness of obesity and diabetes have resulted in Medicare coverage being expanded to include medical nutrition therapy for renal and diabetic patients. Dietitians specializing in these fields will benefit from this coverage.

The areas predicted to experience the fastest growth in job opportunities for dietetic practitioners are outpatient care facilities, physician offices, and foodservice management. Dietitians with specialized training, advanced

degrees, and certifications beyond their state's minimum requirements will enjoy the best job opportunities. Those specializing in renal disease, diabetes, or gerontology will benefit from the growing number of people with diabetes and the aging of the population.

However, there may be some clouds on the otherwise rosy horizon of the healthcare industry. Cost-containment measures, such as budget cutting, downsizing, realignments, outsourcing, and mergers, may affect growth. Many predict that funding for Medicare programs will be reduced, forcing Medicare patients to pay for some home-care costs themselves. However, government surveys of job prospects indicate that healthcare reform will not shrink the workforce.

Negative factors specifically affecting job opportunities in dietetics and nutrition include the fact that some employers are substituting lower-paid workers to do nutrition-related work. Also, the demand for nutritional counseling is related to the patients' ability to pay, either out-of-pocket or through insurance reimbursement. Although the extent of insurance coverage for nutrition services has increased, it still varies widely. Hospitals and nursing care facilities still continue to employ large numbers of dietitians and dietetic technicians, but they also continue to contract with outside firms to run the foodservice operation and move medical nutrition therapy to outpatient departments.

Although dietetic practitioners are regarded as experts in nutrition, there is still some lack of recognition from the public. The American public has increased its knowledge and understanding of foods and nutrition, but misinformation still abounds. Popular magazines are full of attention-grabbing, but inaccurate, advice. Health food stores promote the sale of supposedly "super nutrients" to the tune of billions of dollars a year. Many people lack the educational background to discern a good study from a poor one. Many believe that if it's in print, it must be true.

A Brief Introduction to the Professional Association

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the oldest and most prominent professional organization for dietitians (it is discussed at length in Chapter 8). Among the most important functions of the Academy is the development of Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance, outlining a dietetic practitioner's responsibilities for providing quality nutritional care. The standards provide individual practitioners with a systematic plan for implementing, evaluating, and adjusting performance in any area of practice.⁹ See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the standards.

Because of the increasingly specialized nature of dietetic practice, the leadership of the Academy developed board certification in some specialty areas and Dietetic Practice Groups (DPGs). DPGs provide a way for members of the association to network and share specialized information within their area or areas of interest and practice. Currently, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics supports 26 DPGs and 30 subunits of these DPGs, which are described in Chapter 8 (Figure 2–12).

Another important function of the Academy is its recognition of excellence in practice through awards given annually by the national organization



FIGURE 2-12 The Food and Culinary Professionals Dietetic Practice Group's booth at the Food and Nutrition Conference and Exposition.
Courtesy of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

and by its affiliated state associations.⁹ See Chapter 8 for a list and description of these awards.

Summary

*The horizon leans forward
Offering you space
To place new steps of change*

—Excerpt from “On the Pulse of Morning,” 1993
presidential inaugural poem by Maya Angelou¹²

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The scope of dietetic practice is almost limitless. The creation of new, exciting positions that make use of food and nutrition education and training will continue as long as members of the profession have the imagination and determination to succeed.

“The world is happier, healthier, [and] better off because of the work you do,” proclaimed Rabbi Harold S. Kushner to the dietetic professionals gathered at a recent dietetic association national conference.¹³ The work of dietetics is considered a profession because it requires a specialized body of knowledge; because members render specialized services to society; because their obligations to serve override personal considerations; and because members consider competence, honor, continuing education, research, and sharing of knowledge for the common good to be necessary.

Dietetic practice encompasses nutrition therapy, the food industry, health promotion/disease prevention, foodservice systems, entrepreneurship, and

education. Drawing on their training and knowledge in the fields of science, leadership, technology, research, and management, dietetic professionals communicate and collaborate to provide food and nutrition services for individuals, groups, and communities.

Dietetic practitioners work in private practice or in a hospital, with patients referred by physicians for help in implementing necessary nutritional modifications. Dietetic practitioners serve as consultants in corporate wellness programs, weight-loss programs, and eating disorder clinics. Professional athletes and athletic teams often have full-time dietitians on their training staff.

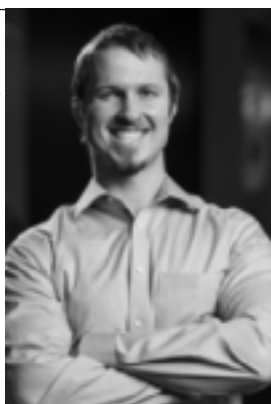
Dietetic practitioners are also involved in scientific research and education. Increasing numbers of dietitians have careers in sales, marketing, and public relations for the food industry, pharmaceutical and computer companies, and equipment manufacturers. They are involved in many areas of community work, especially with pregnant women, women with infants and young children, and the elderly.

Dietetic practitioners are particularly qualified to manage foodservice operations in hospitals, nursing homes, colleges and universities, public schools, commercial restaurants, correctional facilities, catering operations, airline commissaries, and community programs. Interest is growing in combining nutrition credentials with other degrees, such as those in business, law, nursing, physical fitness, and the culinary arts.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has developed DPGs to enable members to network and increase their knowledge within their particular area of practice. The Academy also offers annual awards for excellence in specific areas of practice and develops and promotes standards of practice that outline a dietetic practitioner's responsibilities for providing quality nutritional care.

Societal needs are best served by having a population that is adequately nourished. Dietetics serves people by offering correct and current information so that individuals can make their own choices. The education, training, and knowledge of dietitians make them uniquely qualified to help individuals and society meet their nutritional needs.

Courtesy of Paul Salter



Profile of a Professional

Paul Salter, MS, RD, LD, CSCS

Nutrition Editor

Bodybuilding.com

Sports Nutrition Consultant

Renaissance Periodization, Boise, Idaho

Education:

BS in Dietetics, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
Dietetic Internship, Beaumont Health Systems, Royal Oak, Michigan

MS in Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida

How did you first hear about dietetics and decide to become a Registered Dietitian?

I learned of the Registered Dietitian (RD) credential during my freshman year of college while taking a general education requirement: Elements of Nutrition (Nutrition 101). This class sparked an interest that had always existed, but never fully blossomed. The professor of my class played a prominent role as she outlined the various paths I could take with the RD credential.

What was your route to registration?

I completed my dietetic internship following graduation with a Bachelor's of Science in dietetics. I applied for the Fall Dietetic Internship match and was fortunate enough to begin my internship approximately 7 months after graduating.

At what college or university did you receive your entry-level education?

I completed my BS in Dietetics from the University of Maryland in May 2013. I then completed my Dietetic Internship at Beaumont Health Systems in Royal Oak, Michigan (January–August 2014), with a concentration in medical nutrition therapy. I completed a 12-month intensive master's program at the University of Tampa and earned a Master's of Science in Exercise and Nutrition Sciences.

Where did you complete your supervised practice experience?

I completed my Dietetic Internship at Beaumont Health Systems in Royal Oak, Michigan (January–August 2014), with a concentration in medical nutrition therapy.

Do you have advanced degree(s)? If so, in what and from where?

I have an MS in Exercise and Nutrition Sciences from the University of Tampa. I am also a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA).

How are you involved professionally?

I am consistently learning via online quizzes and attending conferences for both the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) and the NSCA. I have moved six times in the past 3 years (pursuing my dreams) but have been fortunate enough to deliver online presentations and serve as a guest speaker for students interested in sports nutrition and dietetics. I also stay active via online communities to help answer questions for those interested in the nutrition field.

What honors or awards have you received?

- Outstanding Graduate Student, University of Tampa, May 2015
- Campus Recreation Services (University of Maryland) Student Employee Scholarship, Spring 2015
- Men's Novice Lightweight and Overall Champion, National Gym Association, Annapolis Cup, June 2012

Briefly describe your career path in dietetics. What are you doing now?

I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to complete various experiences in the field of sports nutrition. They're best summed up in a list:

- Sports Nutrition Intern, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia: Worked with sports dietitian; shadowed sessions, completed projects, discussed current research.
- St. Vincent's Sports Performance Center, National Football League (NFL) Combine Preparation Program, Indianapolis, Indiana: Worked alongside sports dietitian, strength coaches, sport psychologists, and medical staff to best prepare athletes for NFL Combine. Participated in one-on-one counseling, group sessions, menu planning, meal planning, and other various forms of education.
- Gatorade Sports Nutrition Immersion Program (SNIP), University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill, North Carolina: I was one of six students in the nation selected for this program. I had the opportunity to work alongside two sports dietitians at UNC for a 5-month period while being paid by Gatorade.
 - Worked directly with football team to adequately fuel and hydrate student-athletes throughout training camp.

- Conducted body composition tests (BodPod), nutrition screenings, supplement reviews, and hydration tests (urine specific gravity).
- Collaborated with dietitians to lead grocery store and dining hall tours for student-athletes on various teams.
- Managed athletics department's Gatorade budget and carried out nutrition product distribution.
- Provided educational materials to student-athletes and coaches utilizing print materials, presentations, and new media.
- Contributed to the training and development of other interns within the Sports Nutrition Department.
- Beaumont Health Systems Dietetic Internship, Royal Oak, Michigan
- IMG Academy, full-time Nutrition Coach/Sports Dietitian:
 - Deliver one-on-one and group sessions for full-time student-athletes, camp athletes, professional athletes, and corporate partners accordingly to a broad client base ranging from youth to elite athletes across a range of sports, cultures, and countries.
 - Educate, develop, and execute nutritional supplement strategies for professional athletes at IMG Academy.
 - Oversee IMG Academy professional athlete nutritional supplement program, including education, development, preparation, delivery, inventory, and documentation.
 - Collaborate with food and beverage staff, coaches, and entire performance team to optimally fuel student-athletes.
 - Deliver in-service education sessions to campus staff.

I have had several diverse experiences in the field of sports nutrition and am forever thankful for each and every experience and every contact I made.

I currently serve as the Nutrition Editor for Bodybuilding.com, where I write, edit, and oversee all nutrition-related articles and content published on the website. I also consult with Renaissance Periodization, where I work one-on-one (online) with clients and athletes of various ages, sports, and goals to help them fuel for optimal health, body composition, and performance.

What excites you about dietetics and the future of our profession?

The field of nutrition is gaining more respect each and every day, specifically within the realm of sports nutrition. When I first became interested, roughly 5 years ago, there were a mere 19 full-time sports dietitians across both the collegiate and professional level. Today, there are well over 100 in addition to countless part-time positions, graduate assistant positions, and internships. Athletic performance has seen a great improvement when exposed to the work of a talented sports dietitian, and I am excited to see how far we can push human performance through proper fueling in the years to come.

How is teamwork important to you in your position? How have you been involved in team projects?

The performance team is composed of the sports dietitian(s), strength coaches, sports psychologists, medical staff, and athletic trainers. I was fortunate enough to have each area of expertise under one roof during my time at IMG. Having countless opportunities to share information about athletes with each professional helped all of us to do our jobs better because we were aware of every factor affecting the athlete—injuries, stress, progress, habits, etc. Teamwork is invaluable as it provides numerous pairs of eyes on a similar situation, which allows multiple ideas to be combined to generate the best process and outcome.

What words of wisdom do you have for future dietetics professionals?

Absolutely follow your dreams, wherever they may take you. Do not worry about money, travel, etc., because happiness is the true measure of success, and if you love what you do, finances and travel should not matter.

Courtesy of Whitney Eilersick



Profile of a Professional

Whitney Eilersick, MS, RDN

Assistant Director, Nutrition Services Department
Portland Public Schools, Portland, Oregon

Education:

BS in Clinical Nutrition, University of California, Davis, California

Dietetic Internship, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, Oregon

MS in Clinical Nutrition, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, Oregon

How did you first hear about dietetics and decide to become a Registered Dietitian?

I first had an interest in nutrition when I was in the fifth grade and a teacher introduced us to nutrition concepts of how various foods fuel our bodies and play a role in our overall health. It was also around this time that my mom took an interest in cooking healthier options for our family in order to help my dad reduce his cholesterol levels. I loved and excelled in the sciences, so I knew that this was the area for me.

What was your route to registration?

I completed my internship and MS in Clinical Nutrition at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon.

Where did you complete your supervised practice experience?

I completed my supervised practice in my internship at Oregon Health and Science University. The majority of my supervised practice was at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center but also included time at the Salud Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, Western Culinary Institute, and Shriners Children's Hospital.

Do you have advanced degree(s)? If so, in what and from where?

I graduated with my MS in Clinical Nutrition from Oregon Health and Science University. I was one of the first three students to graduate from their graduate program. The internship, supervised practice hours, and research thesis were completed within 22 months.

What are some examples of your professional involvement at the local, state, or national level at the American Dietetic Association (ADA)/Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or other professional associations?

CIA Healthy Kids Collaborative Member: 2015–current

School Food FOCUS National Procurement Initiative Task Force: 2014–current

Oregon Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Director of Communication and Publication

Board Member: 2013–current

Dietetic Preceptor/Mentor to distance programs, undergraduate students, and high school students: 2013–current

Medical Teams International Volunteer, Honduras: March 2010

Oregon Health and Science University Dietetic Internship Advisory Council Member: 2009–current

Oregon Health and Science University Dietetic Internship Preceptor: 2008–current

Oregon Health and Science University Dietetic Internship Guest Lecturer: 2008–current

School Nutrition Association and Oregon School Nutrition Association: 2007–current

Oregon Health and Science University Masters Curriculum Committee–Masters Handbook Sub-Committee: 2007

Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE), American Dietetic Association

Student Representative: 2005–2006

Student Council Advisory Committee, American Dietetic Association

Student Representative: 2005–2006

Nominations Committee within Student Council Advisory Committee: 2005–2006

What are some of the awards and honors you have received?

- 2014 Oregon Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award
- National Outstanding Preceptor Award Nominee, June 2013
- “You Rock” Award 2013—presented by Portland Public Schools, COO CJ Sylvester
- “30 under 30,” *FoodService Director* Magazine, September 2011
- Oregon Dietetic Association Outstanding Student Award, 2005

Briefly describe your career path in dietetics. What are you doing now?

After graduating from Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), I continued to work for my thesis mentor, Diane Stadler, PhD, RD, LD, as a research assistant at OHSU. That spring, I applied for a new management position within the Portland Public Schools Nutrition Services Department. I was offered the position and joined an amazing team. After 4 years, I was promoted to Senior Program Manager, and then in 2014, I applied for and was offered the position as Assistant Director for the department. As Assistant Director, I am responsible for leading the operations and supply chain teams for the department, which includes 85 schools and about 240 employees.

What excites you about dietetics and the future of our profession?

Dietetics is an ever-changing and evolving field. The possibilities continue to unfold for emerging professionals. Colleagues all over the country are creating new opportunities and promoting the profession in new ways, advocating for our citizens, communities, and their health.

How is teamwork important to you in your position? How have you been involved in team projects?

Teamwork is essential to our daily operations, our effectiveness as managers, and the success of our department. Communication is one of the key pieces to our teamwork, and we are always working to understand and improve in this area. Everyone must be willing to do all tasks and not be afraid to get involved and assist coworkers when needed. Creating the right teamwork culture within an organization is important to the work environment and employee satisfaction.

What words of wisdom do you have for future dietetics professionals?

I am passionate about school foodservice and absolutely love my profession. My days are never the same, and I am continuously challenged in various ways. I am able to use almost all of my knowledge and skills acquired throughout my education and my life experience. I work with amazing people to feed over 30,000 students each day, and each day, I am proud and in awe of my team for having made such a positive impact in our community. My dad told me to “keep my eyes and ears open for all opportunities,” and I continued to say yes to all that I encountered; this helped me get to where I am today.

Suggested Activities

1. Dietetic Practice Groups (DPGs) are a good way to network with professionals who work in specific areas of dietetics. Visit www.eatright.org or refer to Chapter 8 of this book for a complete listing of the 26 DPGs. Choose one of the DPGs you might be interested in joining

later in your career. If possible, attend one of the meetings of this practice group at a national meeting of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or at a regional meeting. Or, interview a member of the practice group to find out what the practice group does to benefit the profession and its individual members.

2. Add to the list of specialty areas of dietetic practice discussed in the chapter either by listing positions you know exist or by developing areas of practice or positions you would be interested in personally. Be creative!
3. Visit www.eatright.org to verify the accuracy of information in this chapter. Has anything changed since this chapter was written?
4. Interested in private practice? Two-thirds of Americans either run their own business or dream of being their own boss. If you are interested in starting your own private practice, visit www.morebusiness.com, click “Tips and Tools” on the main menu, and then click “6 Vital Entrepreneur Skills for a Successful Small Business.” Evaluate your own personal characteristics. Do they match those considered to be important for entrepreneurial success? Explain. Are you more or less interested in private practice after completing this exercise? Explain. If your answer was “more interested,” then you may want to take a look at www.inc.com/startup. This site offers many practical tips and good advice for starting your own business.
5. Interested in a career in foodservice management? Visit the website www.foodservice.com, click “JobSpot,” and then click “Search Jobs.” Which of them might be of interest to you in the future, or now? View a couple of the jobs to see what information is available online about these positions.
6. The salary differences for the various areas of the country may be related to the cost-of-living index in these areas. If you are unsure of what the cost-of-living index is, do an Internet search to find the cost-of-living index and its relationship to the consumer price index. Look up the cities and states listed in this chapter as having the highest and lowest salaries and compare them with the cost-of-living indexes listed for these cities on the Internet.
7. Some of the statistics and facts contained in this chapter may change as a result of economic conditions and other mitigating factors. Go to the Bureau of Labor Statistics website at www.bls.gov and research the latest information from the government on the job outlook for positions in which you have an interest. How does the information differ from that contained in the chapter?
8. Read the Code of Ethics in Chapter 7. As a future dietetic professional, what are some of the ways you could demonstrate that you have met the criteria for Standard 3 (The dietetics practitioner considers the health, safety, and welfare of the public at all times.)? Be sure that you have listed outcomes and/or goals that are specific and measurable.
9. What kinds of positions are available right now? Two companies started by dietitians provide job listings and placement services. Visit

their websites at www.jobsindietetics.com and www.nutritionjobs.com. How do the two sites differ? What positions are currently available? What area of dietetics are they in? Where are they located? What kinds of salaries are being offered?

10. What, in your opinion, should the dietetics profession do to address some of the issues facing practitioners today?

Selected Websites

- www.bls.gov—U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics offers information on jobs and salaries across the United States.
- www.computrition.com—Computrition Foodservice Software Solutions sells computer software for the healthcare and hospitality industries.
- www.eatright.org—The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.
- www.helmpublishing.com—Helm Publishing provides continuing education for dietitians and nurses.
- www.inc.com—Inc. offers small business resources for the entrepreneur.
- www.jobsindietetics.com—Features jobs in dietetics and career services for professionals in dietetics, nutrition, and foodservice.
- www.morebusiness.com—Offers advice for entrepreneurs.
- www.nutritionjobs.com—Features career services for professionals in dietetics, nutrition, and foodservice.
- www.shfm-online.org—Society of Hospitality and Foodservice Management is a professional organization for those working in the corporate foodservice and workplace hospitality industries.

Suggested Readings

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