

Consumer Protection and Dietetics Licensure

Why Is Licensure Important?

Dietetics licensure matters more than people may realize. It is essential to protect your clients and patients, their families and your communities. It makes it much easier for the consumer to locate a practitioner who is qualified and educated in the science of nutrition.

By upholding professional standards of practice and the ethical delivery of nutrition care, licensure protects the consumer from unqualified individuals and potential harm to their health and well-being. It also provides a way to report licensed practitioners who may be practicing in an unethical manner.

Who Must Be Licensed?

Licensure is common, fundamental and essential to professional practice in every state. Its primary purpose is to protect the public by regulating practices, services or activities that could be dangerous or a threat to a consumer if not performed properly.

Licensure standardizes practices, services and activities that require a high level of specialized knowledge and skill. Surgeons must be licensed, along with social workers, cosmetologists and hundreds of other professions.

What Is Nutrition and Dietetics Licensure?

Nutrition and Dietetics licensure requires practitioners to meet education, training, practice and examination qualifications. This ensures practitioners are competent and qualified to provide safe, effective and reliable nutrition services before they are legally permitted to provide complex, specialized care for clients/patients/consumers.

Nutrition and Dietetics licensure aims to ensure that everyone receives safe, effective and reliable nutrition services.

- Establishes a minimum set of qualifications, sets professional standards, and establishes continuing education requirements.
- Protects the consumer from being harmed or misled by unfounded, unreliable, excessive and costly products or services.
- Safeguards communities, especially vulnerable populations such as children, elderly and those who are immunocompromised.
- Empowers consumers by providing a place to report harm and a mechanism to remove those who provide unsafe or ineffective nutrition services.

- Enables consumers to easily identify qualified, competent practitioners, such as the registered dietitian nutritionists.

Licensure upholds the quality of nutrition and dietetics and is an essential aspect of the profession.

- Maintains a standard of practice and professional performance that is ethical and effective.
- Creates a professional community of practitioners who demand and rely on excellence and accountability.
- Compels all licensees to be effective health care practitioners, which ultimately optimizes the care of the client/patient/consumer under the protection of state regulation.
- Helps to identify practitioners who are qualified to provide Medical Nutrition Therapy to treat and manage complex medical conditions and diseases.
- Assists in distinguishing providers of scientific, evidence-based nutrition practice.

Professional licensure increases credibility, visibility and respect.

- Legally recognizes the registered dietitian nutritionist as a credible source of nutrition information.
- Supports the gold standards of care recognized by federal agencies, regulatory bodies and health professionals.
- Provides opportunities to build relationships with policymakers and other stakeholders to positively impact public policy.
- Saves health care dollars by providing a mechanism to identify qualified, practice informed practitioners with demonstrated outcomes.
- Enables licensees to have an integral role in new payment models and innovative health care delivery systems.