



# Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (Competent, Proficient, and Expert) in Oncology Nutrition



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## ABSTRACT

Oncology nutrition encompasses nutrition care for individuals along the cancer care continuum. Nutrition is a vital component of prevention, treatment, and healthy survivorship. The practice of an oncology registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) reflects the setting and population served with diverse cancer diagnoses, including expanded roles and responsibilities reflecting the RDN's interests and organization's activities. Provision of nutrition services in oncology requires that RDNs have advanced knowledge in the focus area of oncology nutrition. Thus, the Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group, with guidance from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Quality Management Committee, has developed Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance as tools for RDNs currently in practice or interested in working in oncology nutrition, to address their current skill level and to identify areas for additional professional development in this practice area. The Standards of Practice address and apply the Nutrition Care Process and workflow elements, which are screening, assessment, diagnosis, intervention, evaluation/monitoring, and discharge planning and transitions of care. The Standards of Professional Performance consist of the following six domains of professionalism including: Quality in Practice, Competence and Accountability, Provision of Services, Application of Research, Communication and Application of Knowledge, and Utilization and Management of Resources. Within each standard, specific indicators provide measurable action statements and describe three skill levels (competent, proficient, and expert) for RDNs working in oncology nutrition.

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*Editor's note: Figures 1 and 2 that accompany this article are available online at [www.jandonline.org](http://www.jandonline.org).*

**T**HE ONCOLOGY NUTRITION Dietetic Practice Group (ON DPG) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy), under the guidance of the Academy Quality Management Committee, has revised the Standards of Practice (SOP) and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP) for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) in Oncology Nutrition previously published in 2010.<sup>1</sup> The revised documents, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (Competent, Proficient, and Expert) in

Oncology Nutrition, reflect advances in oncology nutrition practice during the past 7 years and replace the 2010 Standards. These documents build on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 SOP in Nutrition Care and SOPP for RDNs.<sup>2</sup> The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/Commission on Dietetic Registration's (CDR) Code of Ethics (Revised and approved Code of Ethics available in 2018),<sup>3</sup> along with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 SOP in Nutrition Care and SOPP for RDNs<sup>2</sup> and Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the RDN,<sup>4</sup> guide the practice and performance of RDNs in all settings.

Scope of practice in nutrition and dietetics is composed of statutory and individual components, includes the code(s) of ethics (eg, Academy/CDR, other national organizations, and/or employer code of ethics), and encompasses the range of roles, activities, practice guidelines, and regulations within which RDNs perform. For

credentialed practitioners, scope of practice is typically established within the practice act and interpreted and controlled by the agency or board that regulates the practice of the profession in a given state.<sup>4</sup> An RDN's statutory scope of practice can delineate the services an RDN is authorized to perform in a state where a practice act or certification exists. For more

*Approved September 2017 by the Quality Management Committee of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) and the Executive Committee of the Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy. **Scheduled review date: February 2024.** Questions regarding the Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in Oncology Nutrition may be addressed to Academy Quality Management staff: Dana Buelsing, MS, manager, Quality Standards Operations; and Sharon McCauley, MS, MBA, RDN, LDN, FADA, FAND, senior director, Quality Management at [quality@eatright.org](mailto:quality@eatright.org).*

All registered dietitians are nutritionists—but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians. The Academy's Board of Directors and Commission on Dietetic Registration have determined that those who hold the credential Registered Dietitian (RD) may optionally use "Registered Dietitian Nutritionist" (RDN). The two credentials have identical meanings. In this document, the authors have chosen to use the term *RDN* to refer to both registered dietitians and registered dietitian nutritionists.

information, see <https://www.cdrnet.org/state-licensure-agency-list>.

The RDN's individual scope of practice is determined by education, training, credentialing, experience, and demonstrating and documenting competence to practice. Individual scope of practice in nutrition and dietetics has flexible boundaries to capture the breadth of the individual's professional practice. Professional advancement beyond the core education and supervised practice to qualify for the CDR RDN credential provides RDNs practice opportunities, such as expanded roles within an organization based on training and certifications, if required; or additional credentials (eg, Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition [CSO], Certified Nutrition Support Clinician [CNSC], Board Certified Specialist in Pediatrics [CSP], and Certified Case Manager [CCM]). The Scope of Practice Decision Tool ([www.eatrightpro.org/scope](http://www.eatrightpro.org/scope)), an online, interactive tool, guides an RDN through a series of questions to determine whether a particular activity is within his or her scope of practice. The tool is designed to assist an RDN to critically evaluate his or her personal knowledge, skill, experience, judgment, and demonstrated competence using criteria resources.<sup>5</sup>

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services Hospital<sup>6</sup> and Critical Access Hospital<sup>7</sup> Conditions of Participation now allow a hospital and its medical staff the option of including RDNs or other clinically qualified nutrition professionals within the category of "non-physician practitioners" eligible for ordering privileges for therapeutic diets and nutrition-related services if consistent with state law and health care regulations.

RDNs in hospital settings interested in obtaining ordering privileges must review state laws (eg, licensure, certification, and title protection), if applicable, and health care regulations to determine whether there are any barriers or state-specific processes that must be addressed. For more information, review the Academy's practice tips that outline the regulations and implementation steps for obtaining ordering privileges (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/advocacy/legislation/all-legislation/therapeutic-diet-orders>). For assistance, refer questions to the Academy's State Affiliate organization.

Medical staff oversight of an RDN(s) occurs in one of two ways. A hospital has the regulatory flexibility to appoint an RDN(s) to the medical staff and grant the RDN(s) specific nutrition ordering privileges, or can authorize the ordering privileges without appointment to the medical staff. To comply with regulatory requirements, an RDN's eligibility to be considered for ordering privileges must be approved through the hospital's medical staff rules, regulations, and bylaws, or other facility-specific processes.<sup>8</sup> The actual privileges granted will be based on the RDN's knowledge, skills, experience, and specialist certification, if required, and demonstrated and documented competence.

The Long-Term Care Final Rule published October 4, 2016 in the *Federal Register*, "allows the attending physician to delegate to a qualified dietitian or other clinically qualified nutrition professional the task of prescribing a resident's diet, including a therapeutic diet, to the extent allowed by State law" and permitted by the facility's policies.<sup>9</sup> The qualified professional must be acting within the scope of practice as defined by state law; and is under the supervision of the physician that may include, for example, countersigning the orders written by the qualified dietitian or clinically qualified nutrition professional. RDNs who work in long-term care facilities should review the Academy's updates on CMS that outline the regulatory changes to §483.60 Food and Nutrition Services (<http://www.eatrightpro.org/quality>). Review the state's long-term care regulations to identify potential barriers to implementation; and identify considerations for developing the facility's processes with the medical

director and for orientation of attending physicians. The CMS State Operations Manual, Appendix PP-Guidance for Surveyors for Long-Term Care Facilities contains the revised regulatory language (revisions are italicized and in red color).<sup>10</sup> CMS periodically revises the State Operations Manual Conditions of Participation; obtain the current information at <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/som107Appendices.toc.pdf>.

## ACADEMY QUALITY AND PRACTICE RESOURCES

The Academy's Revised 2017 SOP in Nutrition Care and SOPP for RDNs<sup>2</sup> reflect the minimum competent level of nutrition and dietetics practice and professional performance. The core standards serve as blueprints for the development of focus area SOP and SOPP for RDNs in competent, proficient, and expert levels of practice. The SOP in Nutrition Care is composed of four standards consistent with the Nutrition Care Process and clinical workflow elements as applied to the care of patients/clients/populations in all settings.<sup>11</sup> The SOPP consist of standards representing six domains of professional performance: Quality in Practice, Competence and Accountability, Provision of Services, Application of Research, Communication and Application of Knowledge, and Utilization and Management of Resources. The SOP and SOPP for RDNs are designed to promote the provision of safe, effective, efficient, and quality food and nutrition care and services; facilitate evidence-based practice; and serve as a professional evaluation resource.

These focus area standards for RDNs in oncology nutrition provide a guide for self-evaluation and expanding practice, a means of identifying areas for professional development, and a tool for demonstrating competence in delivering oncology nutrition and dietetic services. They are used by RDNs to assess their current level of practice and to determine the education and training required to maintain currency in their focus area and advancement to a higher level of practice. In addition, the standards can be used to assist RDNs in general clinical practice with

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