



# Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Revised 2017 Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance for Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered

The Academy Quality Management Committee

## ABSTRACT

Nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs) face complex situations every day. Competently addressing the unique needs of each situation and applying standards appropriately are essential to providing safe, timely patient-/client-/customer-centered quality nutrition and dietetics care and services. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) leads the profession by developing standards that can be used by NDTRs (who are credentialed by the Commission on Dietetic Registration) for self-evaluation to assess quality of practice and performance. The Standards of Practice reflect the NDTR's role under the supervision of registered dietitian nutritionists in nutrition screening and the Nutrition Care Process and workflow elements, which includes nutrition screening, nutrition assessment, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention/plan of care, nutrition monitoring and evaluation, and discharge planning and transitions of care. The Standards of Professional Performance consist of 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. Within each standard, indicators provide measurable action statements that illustrate how the standard can be applied to practice. The Academy's Revised 2017 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for NDTRs along with the Academy/Commission on Dietetic Registration Code of Ethics, and the Scope of Practice for the NDTR provide minimum standards and tools for demonstrating competence and safe practice, and are used collectively to gauge and guide an NDTR's performance in nutrition and dietetics practice.

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*Editor's note: Figures 2 and 3 that accompany this article are available online at [www.jandonline.org](http://www.jandonline.org).*

**T**HE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION and Dietetics (Academy) leads the profession of nutrition and dietetics by developing standards against which the quality of practice and performance of Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered (NDTRs) can be evaluated. The following Academy foundational documents guide the practice and performance of NDTRs in all practice settings: Revised 2017 Standards of Practice (SOP) in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP) for NDTRs, along with the Academy/Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) Code of Ethics (Revised and approved Code of Ethics available in

2018)<sup>1</sup> and the Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the NDTR.<sup>2</sup> NDTRs are nutrition and dietetics practitioners credentialed by CDR who are specifically trained and qualified to provide nutrition and dietetics services, and are accountable and responsible for their competent practice. The Standards of Practice (SOP) in Nutrition Care and Standards of Professional Performance (SOPP) define minimum competent level of practice for NDTRs.

## WHAT ARE THE SOP AND SOPP FOR NDTRs?

The standards and indicators found within the SOP and SOPP reflect the minimum competent level of nutrition and dietetics practice and professional performance for NDTRs. The SOP in Nutrition Care is composed of four standards that apply the Nutrition Care Process and Terminology in the care of patients/clients/populations (see Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> The SOPP for NDTRs consist of standards representing six domains

of professional performance (see Figure 1).

The SOP and SOPP reflect the education, training, responsibility, and accountability of the NDTR. Both sets of standards and indicators (Figures 2 and 3, available at [www.jandonline.org](http://www.jandonline.org)) comprehensively describe the minimum expectation for competent

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The Academy's Board of Directors and Commission on Dietetic Registration have determined that those who hold the credential Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTR) may optionally use "Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered" (NDTR). The two credentials have identical meanings. The same determination and option also applies to those who hold the credential Registered Dietitian (RD) and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). The two credentials have identical meanings. In this document, the term *NDTR* is used to refer to both dietetic technicians, registered and nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered, and the term *RDN* is used to refer to both registered dietitians and registered dietitian nutritionists.

care of the patient/client/customer, delivery of services, and technical practice outcomes for the NDTR. This article represents the 2017 update of the Academy's SOP in Nutrition Care and SOPP for NDTRs.

### WHY ARE THE STANDARDS IMPORTANT FOR NDTRs?

The standards promote:

- safe, effective, quality, and efficient food, nutrition, and related services, and dietetics practice;
- evidence-based practice and best practices;
- improved nutrition and health-related outcomes and cost-reduction methods;
- efficient management of time, finances, supplies, technology, and natural and human resources;
- quality assurance, performance improvement, and outcomes reporting;
- ethical and transparent business, billing, and financial management practices<sup>6,7</sup>;
- verification of practitioner qualifications and competence because state and federal regulatory agencies, such as health departments and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) look to professional organizations to create and maintain standards of practice<sup>5,8</sup>;
- practitioner competence and adherence to the rules and regulations of state departments of health and federal regulatory agencies, such as CMS, which state that technical personnel

### CLIENT/PATIENT/RESIDENT/FAMILY/CUSTOMER

Generally, these terms are used interchangeably with the specific term used in a given situation, dependent on the setting and the population receiving care or services. Examples of terms used include, but are not limited to: *patient/client*, *patient/client/customer*, *resident*, *participant*, *student*, *consumer*, or any individual/person, group, population, or organization to which the NDTR provides service. In a clinical setting, the term *patient/client* is commonly used. As a universal term, the use of *customer* in the Standards of Professional Performance is intended to encompass all of the other terms with the meaning taken by the reader reflecting the context of the situation and setting. Use of *customer* is not intended to imply monetary exchange.

- demonstrate competence through education, experience, and specialized training with appropriate credentials as required to perform task(s) assigned<sup>5,8</sup>;
- consistency in practice and performance;
  - nutrition and dietetics research, innovation, and practice development; and
  - individual career advancement.

The standards provide:

- minimum competent levels of practice and performance;
- common measurable indicators for self-evaluation;
- a foundation for public accountability in nutrition and dietetics care and services;
- a description of the role of nutrition and dietetics and the unique services that NDTRs offer within the health care team and in practice settings outside of health care;
- guidance for policies and procedures, job descriptions, competence assessment tools; and
- academic and supervised practice objectives for education programs.

### HOW DOES THE ACADEMY'S SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR THE NDTR GUIDE THE PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE OF NDTRs IN ALL SETTINGS?

The Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the NDTR is composed of statutory, if applicable, and individual components, including the codes of ethics (eg, Academy/CDR, other national organizations, and/or employer code of ethics), and encompasses the range of roles, activities, and regulations within which NDTRs perform.<sup>2</sup> In states where a practice act addresses NDTRs, state licensure acts or certification statutes, as well as other state statutes, and regulations define the NDTR's statutory scope of practice and may delineate the services the NDTR is authorized to perform in that state. State practice acts for RDNs may address the role and supervision required by the RDN, as the NDTRs may be engaged in patient/client care, nutrition education, and population health. In 2017, 46 states had statutory provisions regarding professional regulations for dietitians and nutritionists; one state had statutory provisions for NDTRs (<http://www.eatrightpro.org/resource/advocacy/legislation/all-legislation/licensure>).

The NDTR'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 depth and breadth of the individual's professional practice. The Scope of Practice Decision Tool ([www.eatrightpro.org/scope](http://www.eatrightpro.org/scope)), an online interactive tool, guides an NDTR through a series of questions to determine whether a particular activity is within his or her scope of practice. The tool is designed to allow for an NDTR to critically evaluate his or her personal knowledge, skill, experience, judgment, and demonstrated competence using criteria resources.

### WHY WERE THE STANDARDS REVISED?

Academy documents are reviewed and revised every 7 years and reflect the Academy's expanded and enhanced mission and vision of accelerating improvements in global health and well-being through food

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