

Colleen Kiel, MHSc, RD
Programs and Standards Advisor – Nutrition
Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Standards, Programs and Community Development Branch
21st Floor, 393 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2S1

Dear Colleen:

Re: Public Health Nutritionist Capacity Advisory Committee

The Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH) is a constituent society of the Ontario Public Health Association and is the official voice of public health nutrition professionals in Ontario. OSNPPH members include both public health dietitians and public health nutritionists who together advance optimal nutrition for the health of Ontarians.

OSNPPH commends the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport, and the Chronic Disease Prevention Managers for recognizing the need to examine issues related to public health nutrition capacity in Ontario. We recognize there are health units across the province where recruitment and retention of public health nutritionists and public health dietitians are problematic.

OSNPPH has also identified building public health nutrition capacity as a priority in our current strategic plan. In our earlier document, *Public Health Nutrition...An Investment in the Future* (<http://www.osnpph.on.ca/pdfs/InvestmentInTheFuture1.pdf>) we stressed the need for public health nutrition professionals in Ontario health units, bringing appropriate skills, and a unique perspective. Given our common goal of working towards building public health nutrition capacity in Ontario, our membership representation of both public health dietitians and public health nutritionists, and training in public health nutrition, we see great opportunity and value in collaborating with the Public Health Nutritionist Capacity Advisory Committee on these very important issues.

We are urging the Public Health Nutritionist Capacity Advisory Committee to consider:

- Inviting a representative from OSNPPH to participate on the committee
- Consulting the groups listed in Appendix A to complete a needs assessment and develop recommendations
- Completing a comprehensive needs assessment, in collaboration with OSNPPH and stakeholder agencies
- Developing comprehensive recommendations that address:

- Training requirements and opportunities for public health dietitians and public health nutritionists
- Supporting undergraduate, internship and graduate level programs in training future public health dietitians and public health nutritionists (see Appendix B for example)
- Promoting the roles of public health dietitians and public health nutritionists
- Filling vacancies for public health dietitians and public health nutritionists across the province
- Reviewing the criteria and qualifications currently in the HPPA related to Public Health Nutritionist qualifications

Public health nutrition professionals in Ontario have a very broad range of roles and responsibilities. The issues surrounding the capacity of public health nutrition professionals are very complex. The potential recommendations from this Committee will have a far-reaching impact on the practice of public health nutrition professionals across Ontario. We hope you will consider our recommendations and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kathy Page in black ink.

Kathy Page, RD
OSNPPH Co-Chair Year 2

Handwritten signature of Amy MacDonald in black ink.

Amy MacDonald, RD
OSNPPH Co-Chair Year 1

Appendix A:

Ontario's public health nutrition capacity is a pertinent issue for the following groups:

- Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)
- Chronic Disease Prevention Managers and Family Health Managers
- College of Dietitians of Ontario
- Dietetic Education Leadership Forum of Ontario (DELFO)
- Dietitians of Canada (DC)
- Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport (MHPS)
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC)
- Nutrition Resource Centre (NRC)
- Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP)
- Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA)
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH)
- Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP)
- Pan-Canadian Task Force for Public Health Nutrition
- All relevant Universities (Brescia University College, Ryerson University, University of Guelph, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario)*

* With consideration to out-of-province internship and graduate programs and designations.

Appendix B:

Few internship programs traditionally offer extensive placements in public health and community nutrition. The Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Public Health Dietetic Internship Program is one example which does offer extensive public health learning opportunities, however currently the future of this program is unknown.

Since its inception in 1993, the KFL&A program has had 82 graduates (with 6 current candidates). In contrast to many other internship programs, KFL&A interns are offered at least 10 weeks in community nutrition rotations. An informal environmental scan done in early 2010, estimated that over one third of graduates work in community and public health nutrition.

In 2010-2011, registration costs increased from \$150 to \$200. The registration for 2011-2012 will be \$700. Beyond, June 2012 the future of this program is unknown. Recommendations of this committee may impact the future of this program.