

Support House Bill HB 3585 Modernizing Illinois Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist Practice Act



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The purpose of the act §225 ILCS 30/ is stated in Sec. 5

The practice of dietetics and nutrition, including the provision of medical nutrition therapy, in the State of Illinois is hereby declared to affect the public health, safety, and welfare and to be subject to regulation and control in the public interest. It is further declared that the practice of dietetics and nutrition plays an important part in the attainment and maintenance of health and that it is in the public's best interest that persons who present themselves as providers of nutrition care meet specific requirements and qualifications. This Act shall be liberally construed to best carry out these objectives and purposes.

What can licensed individuals do under this bill?

The primary role of the qualified licensee is to provide medical nutrition therapy (MNT) and other nutrition care services. Medical nutrition therapy means

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nutrition care services provided for the treatment or management of a disease or medical condition. MNT is commonly provided to individuals with diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, cancer, hypertension, kidney disease, celiac disease or other food and nutrition-related medical conditions (e.g., food allergies, eating disorders or pre-diabetes).

Individuals licensed under this bill are able to translate evidence-based information into layman's terms to enable individuals to take actionable steps to positively impact disease management or to treat or rehabilitate an illness, injury, or condition.

How does §225 ILCS 30/ support jobs? The proposed bill:

- ▶ Exempts from licensure any individual "providing nutrition information, nutrition recommendations, health coaching, holistic and wellness education, guidance, motivation, behavior change management, weight control, or other nutrition care services, provided that they do not constitute medical nutrition therapy ... and that the individual does not hold themselves out as licensed or qualified to practice dietetics and nutrition or a provider of medical nutrition therapy ... or otherwise violate...[the] Act"
- ▶ Allows trainers and health coaches to help individuals with prediabetes or obesity control their weight as part of a multidisciplinary team, including at YMCAs, for-profit weight loss centers, and through Diabetes Prevention Programs
- ▶ Allows unlicensed individuals to provide nutrition care services to family members without remuneration
- ▶ Continues to allow individuals to sell and furnish information about dietary supplements without a license and adds the ability to do so with herbs to that exemption
- ▶ Ensures unlicensed individuals working under the direct supervision of licensees can aid in the provision of MNT



**4,185 LDNs
IN ILLINOIS**

BILL HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Clarifies and expands interdisciplinary role of unlicensed persons, such as health coaches and trainers, in nutrition and weight control
- ▶ Updates nomenclature of licenses to reflect different pathways and standardized terminology
- ▶ Facilitates telehealth to provide additional opportunities for the citizens of Illinois to access and provide safe and effective care
- ▶ Allows the board to provide guidance explaining what unlicensed individuals may do under this law



Licensees **QUALIFIED** to Provide Medical Nutrition Therapy

1. **Must meet stringent education requirements** from a U.S. regionally accredited university or validated foreign equivalent with either (a) Completion of a bachelor’s degree or above meeting the gold standard of an academic program in dietetics and nutrition accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) that prepares one to be a registered dietitian nutritionist OR (b) Completion of a master’s or doctorate in nutrition as specified in §ILCS 30/20.
2. **Must complete board-approved supervised practice experience** that either (a) Meets ACEND’s rigorous accreditation standards providing competencies necessary to prepare one to practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist through internships in a variety of clinical settings OR (b) Is a board-approved internship or a documented, supervised practice experience in nutrition services of not less than 1000 hours demonstrating competency in nutrition care and the provision of medical nutrition therapy (with additional requirements outlined in §ILCS 30/46).
3. **Must pass a comprehensive examination** from a certification program accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. Registered dietitian nutritionists and other qualified nutrition professionals adhere to professional codes of ethics referenced in Title 68 of Illinois Professional Regulation.



There are large and **IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES** in nutrition education and training of licensees



Individuals **NOT QUALIFIED** to Provide Medical Nutrition Therapy

Many organizations market a variety of nutrition courses providing fitness professionals, health coaches, and others the opportunity to enhance their nutrition knowledge and earn various credentials, certificates/certifications, online diplomas, or titles. Many of these programs advise applicants to review their state laws to determine what nutrition services can legally be offered once the advertised credential is earned. **Under existing Section 15, in order to practice dietetics and/or nutrition in Illinois, one must currently be licensed unless otherwise exempt.**

An unaccredited certificate or diploma, standing alone, is insufficient to authorize a person to practice dietetics and/or nutrition in Illinois, but provisions in the proposed law would newly allow them to provide certain non-medical nutrition care services. Individuals would need to continue meeting specified standards and obtain a license to provide nutrition care services to manage or treat a disease or medical condition or use a title indicating that one is licensed or qualified to practice, unless otherwise exempt.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY IS BEING PROVIDED?

One would not unlawfully engage in the practice of dietetics and nutrition under this bill unless that person provides medical nutrition therapy in the context of a professional-client relationship. It is neither the purpose of this bill nor the intent of its proponents to restrict the expression of general information, guidance or encouragement about food, lifestyle or dietary practices, whether through general publication—including books, television, radio, articles or website posts—or in one-on-one interactions. Thus, individuals are permitted to express information, guidance or encouragement about food, lifestyle or dietary practices to the public generally and to any willing and competent adult listener directly without first obtaining a license so long as they do not hold themselves out as a dietitian nutritionist or nutrition specialist and they do not provide such information, guidance or encouragement as part of a professional-client relationship formed to assess individual nutritional needs and provide medical nutrition therapy to treat or manage a disease or medical condition.

