

# NEWS for the Licensed Dietitian



A newsletter published by the Oregon Board of Examiners of Licensed Dietitians

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### Special points of interest:

- *Congratulations to New Licensees*
- *Mid-Cycle Licensing Available*
- *Q & A*
- *Licensed Dietitian or Nutritionist?*

### BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF LICENSED DIETITIANS

<i>Madelyn Koontz, RD, LD Albany, OR Dietitian Member</i>	<i>Chair</i>
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<i>Terese Scollard, RD, LD Beaverton, OR Dietitian Member</i>	<i>Board Member</i>
<i>Linda Graybeal Lake Oswego, OR Public Member</i>	<i>Board Member</i>

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The Board of Licensed Dietitians welcomes two new board members: Dr Linda Lester, a research physician at OHSU, and Linda Graybeal, a public member. Dr. Lester has a master-of-science degrees in Nutrition. She teaches medical students nutrition courses and does research in the field of diabetes. Ms. Graybeal has a law degree and has also taught French and Literature at various Colleges and Universities in Oregon.

The New Year brought a change in the Executive Officer. Ann Aalund retired in order to spend more time with her family. We shall miss her as she has made many contributions to the board and has been a valuable resource person. Douglas Van Fleet, who has been part-time in the office the past few months, is the new Executive Officer. He has recently worked for several other medical related boards in Oregon and comes highly recommended.

Three former board members were recognized for their years of contribution to the licensure board. Bart Duell, MD, former chair of the board, and Caroline Smith, JD were presented with certificates attesting to

their years of service. Kathleen Ellis, RD, LD, also former chair, was similarly recognized in absentia.

At the January board meeting, Jessie Pavlinac, MS, RD, CSR, LD, clinical nutrition manager at OHSU, updated the board on the new Medical Nutrition Therapy Act that became effective January 1, 2002. Because Oregon has state licensure available for dietitians, the RD must be licensed to meet the requirements of the Act.

The Board exhibited information and application materials at the Oregon Dietetic Association annual meeting in Eugene this Spring.

In early summer, the Board spent a half-day establishing new priorities and strategies for the upcoming biennium.

Please contact the Board office if you have questions or need information.

~ Madeline Koontz

## WEBSITE UPDATE

### \* Employment Verification & Consumer Link

The Board Internet site now details our listing of licensed dietitians for the purpose of employment verification. The Board office receives multiple requests for verification of licensure status. The service for licensees and employers is now available on-line at the *Directory of Licensees* location at <http://www.oregon.gov/obeld>

### \* Consumer Nutrition Information

A link to Tufts University Nutrition Navigator was added to our website to support Oregon consumers' access to sound nutrition information and resources.



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## Q & A “Answering Your Questions”

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At the 2002 Oregon Dietetic Association Annual Meeting in Eugene, the audience was asked whether or not they knew about MedWatch. Many present were not aware of the program. The Special Nutritionals Adverse Event Monitoring System assists the FDA in consumer protection at a national and local level. The system is currently being revised. Check <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/caersltr.html> for more detail on the revision. However, reports of problems with products can be reported at <http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/>.

### **The Special Nutritionals Adverse Event Monitoring System (SN/AEMS)**

**What is it?** Adverse event (illness or injury) reports associated with use of a special nutritional product: dietary supplements, infant formulas, and medical foods.

**When did it start?** The SN/AEMS was established in early 1993 following the establishment of the Office of Special Nutritionals.

**Source of reports?** A variety of sources: FDA's [MedWatch](#) program, FDA's field offices, other Federal, State, and local public health agencies, letters and phone calls from consumers and health professionals.

**What are adverse event monitoring systems?** These serve as warnings for identifying emerging public health problems associated with use of marketed products:

- Adverse event monitoring systems are designed to identify unanticipated or unintended safety problems with use of marketed products.
- Patterns of adverse events help FDA identify the need for further investigation to determine whether public health actions are needed.

**What do I need to keep in mind when using information from the SN/AEMS?** Reporting is **voluntary** and the information is **as reported** by the consumer or health care professional. This means that:

- Only adverse events reported to FDA will be in the SN/AEMS. If an event occurred but is not reported to FDA, it will not be in the database. Absence of information does not necessarily mean a particular product or ingredient has not been or is not likely to be associated with an adverse event.
- **There is no certainty that a reported adverse event can be attributed to a particular product or ingredient. The available information may not be complete enough to make this determination.**
- The total number of adverse events cannot be used to estimate the rate of occurrence in the population. Not all adverse events are reported, and there are no reliable data on population use patterns.
- Reporting of an adverse event may be affected by many factors, including length of time a product or ingredient has been marketed or publicity.
- Comparisons of the safety of one product versus another cannot be directly obtained from these data. The available information may not be complete enough to make this comparison.
- The inclusion of a product as a special nutritional in the SN/AEMS does NOT necessarily represent its legal/regulatory status. The available information may not be complete enough to make this determination.

**How do I report an adverse event?** Go to MedWatch at: <http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/how.htm>

*U. S. Food and Drug Administration  
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
Office of Special Nutritionals*



## Licensed Dietitian or *Nutritionist*?

The Board has received various comments and concerns from citizens and licensed dietitians about nutritionists who are not licensed, but who are in Oregon and charging citizens for services. While the Oregon Licensure Act has no jurisdiction over a nutritionist, the following article, reprinted with permission, may be of interest for its perspective.

<http://www.quackwatch.com/02ConsumerProtection/licensing.html>

### Why “Nutritionist” Licensing Is Important by Stephen Barrett, M.D.

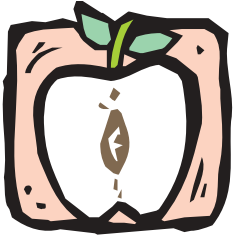
During the past 60 years, perhaps 50 individuals without valid credentials have pretended to be medical doctors and actually managed for a time to practice. So far as I know, no one has ever been exposed as a fake dentist, podiatrist, optometrist, or even chiropractor. But in nutrition, nonaccredited correspondence schools and other organizations have issued thousands of “degrees” and certificates which suggest that the recipient is a qualified expert in nutrition. These documents are promoted as though they are equivalent in meaning to established credentials — which they are not.

The most prominent nonaccredited school was Donsbach University of Huntington Beach, California, whose president, [Kurt Donsbach, D.C.](#), has been involved in dozens of questionable health and nutrition ventures. Most “textbooks” required for the school’s basic curriculum were books written for the general public by promoters of dubious nutrition practices. A typical “degree” program took less than a year to complete. “Graduates” typically refer to themselves as “nutrition consultants,” a term also used by some reputable nutritionists. In 1987, Jacob Swilling assumed ownership of Donsbach University, which was renamed International University for Nutrition Education but soon went defunct. Some “graduates” of these schools are still in practice.

[Bernadean University](#), of Van Nuys, California, offered “nutritionist” and “cancer researcher” certificates, “master’s degrees,” and “Ph.D. degrees” in acupuncture, reflexology, iridology, naturopathy, homeopathy, and nutrition. Dietitian Virginia Aronson took the “nutritionist” course and reported that she got high grades on all tests whether she put down correct answers or not. In 1982, Bernadean was ordered to cease operations because it was not authorized by the state. However, it continued to operate and was recently renamed Burney University and Burney University. Bernadean’s most prominent alumnus is “Dr.” Richard Passwater, author of *Supernutrition* and several other books.

[Clayton College of Natural Health](#), of Birmingham, Alabama, offers home-study courses leading to “degrees” in “natural health,” naturopathy, “holistic nutrition,” and “holistic health sciences.” [Columbus University](#), of Metairie, Louisiana, offers doctoral degrees in naturopathy, hypnotherapy, holistic health, and nutrition counseling. Both schools state that they are accredited by the [World Association of Universities and Colleges \(WAUC\)](#). However, since the U.S. Secretary of Education has not recognized WAUC, its accreditation process has no academic significance.

[Columbia Pacific University \(CPU\)](#), founded in 1978, offered programs leading to bachelors, masters, and doctorate-level “degrees” in various subjects. It was never accredited but



managed to operate in Novato, California until December 1999, when the Marin County Superior Court ordered it to cease operations within the State. In February 2001, when the appeals process ended, the proprietors were ordered to pay a civil penalty of \$10,000 and provide refunds to recently enrolled students who requested them. By that time, however, the school had moved to Missoula, Montana and changed its name to Commonwealth Pacific University.

“Nutrition consultants” who wish to acquire additional “credentials” can join the [American Association of Nutritional Consultants](#), which issues certificates suitable for framing. During the 1980s, its “professional membership” application asked only for the applicant’s name and address plus \$50. Several investigators, including me, have enrolled household pets as professional members. Other groups issuing similarly dubious credentials have included the [American Nutraceutical Association](#) and the [National Academy of Research Biochemists](#).

In response to the flaunting of dubious credentials, dietitians have gained passage of laws to regulate nutritionists in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Some make it illegal for unqualified persons to call themselves dietitians or nutritionists, while others define nutrition practice and who is eligible to practice. The most basic requirement is completion of accredited training. Opponents claim that bills of this type are motivated by greed and an intention to create a monopoly for one school of thought. The real issue, however, is public protection.

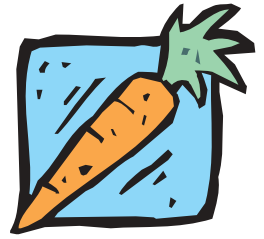
It is unfair to expect people to check the credentials of every practitioner they encounter. Rather, it should be government’s role to set licensing standards and to prevent individuals who don’t meet the standards from representing themselves as equivalent to those who do. Licensing does not offer complete protection against all forms of nutrition practice conducted privately between consenting adults. (It does not, for example, protect people from the poor advice offered by many chiropractors, acupuncturists, naturopaths, and health-food retailers.) But it can deter untrained individuals from widely advertising that they are experts.

### For Further Information

- [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) (lists approved agencies)
- [Degree Mills](#) (overview by John and Mariah Bear)
- [Name It & Frame It?](#) (discusses Christian degree mills)
- [Where to Get Professional Nutrition Advice](#)
- [Court Orders Columbia Pacific University to Cease Operating Illegally in California](#)

*This article was revised on April 17, 2002. It is the opinion of its author.*

Interested licensees can sign up for a free on-line newsletter that addresses this and other topics at <http://www.quackwatch.com/00AboutQuackwatch/chd.html>.



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*The **News for Licensed Dietitians** is published by the  
Board of Examiners of Licensed Dietitians as part of its  
mission to protect the public's health, safety and well-being  
by regulating licensed dietetic practice.*

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
<http://www.oregon.gov/obeld>

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