

Letter to Editors, Athletic Clubs, Nursing Homes, etc.

In response to consumer concerns, the Board of Examiners of Licensed Dietitians feels duty-bound to address the reliability of the credentials of nutrition advisors.

In the nutrition area, non-accredited schools and other organizations issue a multitude of "degrees" and "certificates." These documents are promoted as equivalent to established credentials that qualify the recipient as an expert in nutrition. This may not be true and may be confusing to the public. Further, this is potentially dangerous for people who need counseling or treatment for serious nutrition-related diseases such as diabetes, high blood cholesterol and weight management.

In order to protect the public from acting on advice from unqualified and unlicensed nutrition advisors, the State of Oregon has established a licensure system for dietitians based on statutory law. The public is ensured through this process that the licensed dietitian meets and maintains national and state standards of knowledge and experience for the profession.

It is not within the scope of the Board to investigate complaints related to unlicensed dietitians or nutritionists. However, in the interest of public safety and health, the Licensure Board recommends that licensed dietitians or other medical personnel who are regulated by law be the ones to provide nutrition advice to the public.

To that end, the Board of Examiners of Licensed Dietitians encourages the public to consult the Board through its website located at <http://www.oregon.gov/obeld>. The site outlines standards and priorities of the Board as stated in the licensure act.

This website also provides the consumer with a current listing of licensed dietitians in the State of Oregon as well as other valuable resource information. The Board urges Oregonians to inform and protect themselves by using the website and seeking nutrition and diet advice from dietitians licensed by the State. Thank you for allowing us to publicly address this matter. Please feel free to contact the Board through the website if questions remain.