

## 2025 Policy Day Statehouse Talking Points:

Please alert your legislator that the RD Licensure Compact Bill has been introduced in the medical subcommittee and is awaiting a hearing.

This bill would provide a streamlined pathway for dietitians to practice between states that pass the compact legislation

### Benefits to our profession:

- Facilitates mobility for licensees
- Expands employment opportunities into new markets
- Eases the financial burden of applying for and maintaining multiple licenses
- Supports relocating military spouses and families
  - o Unemployment is higher among military spouses than the general population, and reducing barriers to employment is a priority for the Dept of Defense
- Improves continuity of care

### Benefits to our state dietetics board:

- Reduces an administrative burden
- Creates compact information system that facilitates discipline and licensure information across states
- Expands cooperation among state licensure boards during investigation and disputes
- Allows regulators to retain jurisdiction over licensees practicing in their state

### Benefits to our state:

- Promotes workforce development and strengthens labor markets
- Expands patient access to highly qualified practitioners
- Enhances public safety through a shared interstate data system and licensure and disciplinary information, allowing for rapid verification of licensure status and cooperation among states
- Preserves state sovereignty

When speaking to legislators about the importance of Registered Dietitians (RDs), it's essential to highlight their vital role in public health, healthcare systems, and the economy. Here are some key talking points:

#### 1. **Improved Public Health Outcomes:**

- o **Chronic Disease Prevention and Management:** RDs play a crucial role in preventing and managing chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Proper nutrition counseling can help reduce the risk and severity of these conditions.
- o **Evidence-Based Guidance:** RDs provide science-backed, individualized nutrition advice, helping people make healthier choices that lead to better long-term health outcomes.

## 2. **Cost Savings to the Healthcare System:**

- **Reduced Healthcare Costs:** Studies show that nutrition counseling by RDs leads to fewer hospital admissions, less use of medications, and a reduction in the overall cost of healthcare for individuals with chronic diseases.
- **Prevention of Expensive Medical Conditions:** By intervening early with nutrition education, RDs can help prevent the development of costly conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and obesity-related complications.

## 3. **Access to Specialized Knowledge:**

- **Nutrition Expertise:** Registered Dietitians are highly trained professionals with a deep understanding of nutrition science, public health, and medical conditions. They are uniquely qualified to deliver evidence-based advice that can improve outcomes for individuals with special dietary needs (e.g., those with food allergies, cancer, kidney disease, or eating disorders).
- **Customization of Care:** RDs are trained to develop individualized nutrition plans that consider personal health conditions, lifestyle, cultural preferences, and other factors, ensuring optimal care.

## 4. **Support for Vulnerable Populations:**

- **Supporting Underserved Communities:** RDs are integral in promoting health in underserved populations, such as low-income communities, where diet-related chronic diseases are more prevalent. They can provide education and resources to combat food insecurity and promote better nutritional practices.
- **Pediatric and Maternal Health:** RDs play a key role in maternal and child nutrition, ensuring that women and children have the necessary nutrients for optimal growth and development.

## 5. **Positive Impact on Mental Health:**

- **Mental Health and Nutrition:** Research increasingly shows the connection between nutrition and mental health. RDs help individuals understand how food impacts their mood, stress levels, and overall mental well-being, which can complement mental health treatments.

## 6. **Workforce and Economic Contributions:**

- **Job Creation:** The field of dietetics creates jobs in hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, nursing homes, foodservice, research, and public health. Supporting RDs means supporting economic growth in various sectors.
- **Economic Benefits of Preventive Care:** By promoting healthy eating, RDs help to reduce the economic burden of preventable diseases and promote healthier, more productive communities.

## 7. **Public Trust and Credentialing:**

- **Accountability and Credibility:** Unlike nutritionists or other unlicensed individuals offering dietary advice, RDs are highly credentialed professionals. They complete accredited education programs, pass national exams, and often participate in ongoing professional development. This ensures they provide accurate, safe, and reliable advice.

#### 8. **Advocacy for Nutrition Education in Schools:**

- **Nutrition Education:** RDs are key advocates for incorporating nutrition education into school curriculums, teaching children and adolescents healthy eating habits early in life to establish lifelong health.

#### 9. **Role in Emergency and Disaster Response:**

- **Crisis Nutrition:** RDs are critical during natural disasters and emergencies, where they help manage nutrition needs in shelters, food banks, and recovery programs, ensuring people receive safe and adequate nutrition.

#### 10. **Support for Legislation and Policies:**

- **Advocacy for Better Policies:** Encouraging policies that incorporate the expertise of RDs can promote healthier populations. This includes advocating for policies that support nutrition education, improve food environments, and ensure access to healthy food for all.

By emphasizing these points, legislators can better understand the significant, multifaceted role that Registered Dietitians play in improving the health and well-being of communities while also contributing to cost savings and economic growth.