

HB4608: Licensing the Practice of Medical Nutrition Therapy

THE ISSUE

- Michigan is one of two states that does not have statutory provisions specifically regulating the practice of medical nutrition therapy and/or associated titles used by practitioners, such as “dietitian” and “nutritionist.”
- The provision of medical nutrition therapy is a branch of the practice of medicine that dietitians in Michigan are currently providing without any clear State authority.
- Dietitians have worked with stakeholders and Michigan’s licensing department (LARA) to propose a bill that provides for licensure of those qualified to provide medical nutrition therapy. While legislation was introduced in the 101st Legislature (SB 614), further refinements, at the request of LARA, were needed.

WHAT THIS LEGISLATION WOULD DO

- This legislation would provide for licensure of dietitian nutritionists (LDNs) as qualified nutrition professionals with the knowledge, skills, and competency to provide evidence-based, safe, and effective medical nutrition therapy for the treatment or management of an individual’s disease or medical condition.
- This legislation would serve to protect the public by identifying for Michigan citizens who is a qualified provider of medical nutrition therapy and ensuring only such providers, unless otherwise exempt, provide this form of medical treatment.
- This legislation would provide State authority to support Medicare’s 2014 and 2016 Condition of Participation changes, which provided CMS authority for qualified dietitians to write therapeutic diet orders so long as in accordance with State law. As such, this bill would support greater access to timely, cost-effective nutrition care in Michigan hospitals and nursing care facilities.
- This legislation would require LDNs to have a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree from a regionally and programmatically accredited academic program, complete 1,000 hours of accredited supervised clinical training, and pass the dietitian examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

WHAT THIS LEGISLATION WOULD NOT DO

- This legislation would not prevent any other type of licensed professional who has it within their scope to practice medical nutrition therapy, from providing services for which the individual is licensed.
- This legislation would not prevent anyone, including personal trainers, health coaches, fitness centers, or supplement vendors, from providing the following services so long as they do not involve or constitute the provision of medical nutrition therapy:
 - general nonmedical nutrition information, guidance, encouragement, or individualized nutrition recommendations for wellness or primary prevention of chronic disease;
 - behavior change management, coaching, or assessment;
 - services for weight management;
 - evaluation, guidance, information, and education on the use of food, food materials, or dietary supplements;
 - explanations to individuals or groups about food or food products, including dietary supplements; or
 - other nutrition care services.