

The Honourable Paul Merriman
Minister of Health
Room 204, Legislative Building
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Regina, SK
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Sent by email to: he.minister@gov.sk.ca

Dear Minister Merriman,

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge your work in protecting the health of Saskatchewan residents during this very challenging time and constantly changing pandemic.

As a dietitian, I am proud to share that dietitians have continued to tirelessly support Canadians throughout the pandemic by innovating in the delivery of nutrition care in hospitals, communities and in private practice. And as more healthcare services transitioned online, many dietitians also embraced the shift to virtual practice to continue to provide evidence-based care to their clients. One challenge, however, with this virtual model, is that dietitians must be registered with the Saskatchewan college to provide services to Saskatchewan residents.

I call on the Government of Saskatchewan to remove the current barriers of cross-border practice for dietitians by supporting the necessary regulatory changes or bilateral agreements needed to allow dietitians to practice in Saskatchewan if they are registered in another Canadian province.

How changing cross-border restrictions can improve the public's access to evidence-based nutrition care:

- **Reduce misinformation:** Dietitians are the only regulated food and nutrition health professionals in Canada but compete with unregulated nutrition providers, who have no restrictions on where they practice virtually. [Unregulated nutrition providers can spread misinformation and harmful advice](#). This also contributes to public confusion about food and nutrition information and limits access to regulated health professionals.
- **Access to expertise:** Some regions have few dietitians with in-depth expertise and experience in a certain practice area (for example, post-cancer risk reduction, fertility, pediatric nutrition, or eating disorders). Individuals who require this level of care should be able to access a dietitian who can help them, regardless of the province they and the healthcare provider reside. This would also increase choice so that the public can work with a dietitian who meets their personal needs.
- **Relationship building:** Restrictions on cross-border practice also means when a client moves provinces they may no longer be able to access their dietitian with whom they have built a trusted and supportive relationship, again limiting access and choice to the

public. Cost and time barriers prevent most dietitians from registering in multiple jurisdictions.

The report, [*Beyond COVID-19: HEAL's recommendation for a healthier nation*](#), recommended that governments continue to invest in innovations in virtual care including addressing licensing issues across provincial borders. As you consider regulatory modernization, I urge you to protect the public in this new virtual context and to ensure that Saskatchewan residents have equitable access to health care throughout the pandemic and beyond.

I look forward to your written response and would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,