



A Path Forward

Annual Report 2020-21

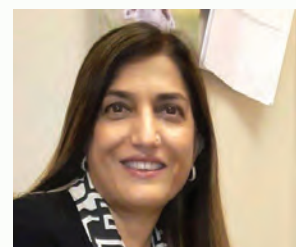
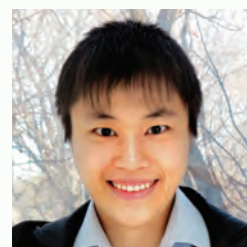
Forging a new path

It's been a year of change for everyone: Dietitians of Canada (DC) members, the organization, the country, the planet. And one thing is on all minds: How do we move forward? How do we continue to evolve in a way that is healthy and sustainable? To grow and become the best we can be?

Dietitians of Canada has embarked on a new path. Each step is guided by the 2020-24 Strategic Plan — the roadmap to a better, stronger, more inclusive future for the profession, the organization, and all members. It's our guide to creating a sustainable organization which is able to support not only this, but the future generations of Canadian dietitians.

Most journeys are winding ones. They take time. They occasionally detour. And that's ok. We're moving in an important new direction. In this report we look back on the first year of the journey — as we move further along an exciting path forward.

Pictured: DC Award recipients.
Full list on [page 13](#).



Photos showing two or more people are from the DC archives and depict events that took place prior to March 2020.



The opportunity of change

A message from Carol Donovan RD, Board Chair

Board of Directors

Carol Donovan
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Belle River, ON

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Timothy Lau
Students and New Professionals
Vancouver, BC

We are always here
for you — and just
an email away, at
board@dietitians.ca.

It has been said that things don't get better by chance, but by change. This past year has demonstrated what a changing world we work and live in, and the possibilities that open up when we make change happen. At the conclusion of Year One of the Dietitians of Canada (DC) **four-year Strategic Plan**, I see how exciting this reshaping process is, as we seek to create a reinvigorated DC that supports growth by embracing change.

As my term on the Board of Directors of DC comes to an end, I am immensely thankful for the opportunity to have served all of you. It has been a career highlight to work with such an excellent group of Board Members and supportive DC staff. I have learned so much, both professionally and personally, and I have gained an even deeper respect for the members of this wonderful profession.

The Board of Directors must look at everything we do with the members in mind and the future direction of DC as our compass. Although the pandemic put a stop to in-person meetings, I have met with you virtually and watched the profession grow and change in response to the challenges put in front of us. Whether supporting seniors, working on the frontlines in hospitals, contact tracing in public health or moving their work online, dietitians across the country adapted and responded to the needs of the public to support the health and safety of all Canadians.

I am also impressed with how you have expanded the use of social media in our profession. I see such great things ahead for dietitians. I encourage you to get involved with your national professional association and share your insights and ideas with the Board. This is how we can shape the future for us all and build an organization that meets your needs.

A member priority which has become a key part of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan is to make DC a more diverse and inclusive community of dietitians. This work is ongoing and an important goal for the new CEO will be to build a sustainable association with a vibrant future, while increasing the sense of belonging for all members.

As the Board welcomes a new Chair, new Board members and a new leader for DC, more change will be inevitable. And with this change comes the opportunity to make things better. Thank you for the opportunity to have served you these past four years. It has been my honour and privilege.

Stay healthy and happy. Until our paths cross again, I wish you well.

Sincerely,
Carol

Our new Strategic Plan

Download a PDF with details of the **2020-24 Strategic Plan**.

In October 2020 we launched DC's new Strategic Plan, which will guide the association's activities and priorities until 2024. The Strategic Plan was developed with input from members, stakeholders, educators and the external environment to ensure it represents the range of values and priorities of the DC membership.

The Strategic Plan focuses on three key priorities: voice, community and support.

Be the national VOICE of dietitians. This involves leading activities to help ensure that dietitians are valued by the public, health professionals and others, and that dietitians are equipped to influence decisions.

Create a diverse and inclusive COMMUNITY. This includes engaging in activities that ensure DC members experience a sense of belonging to a mutually supportive, engaged, diverse and inclusive professional community.

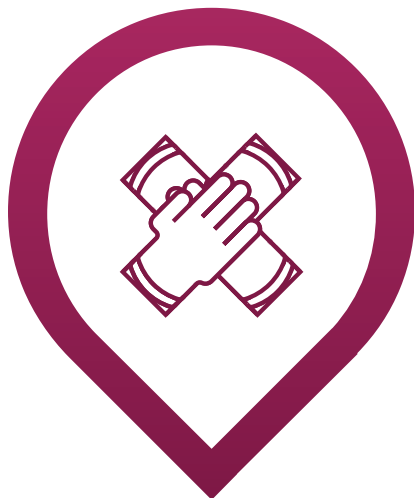
SUPPORT career-long leadership, excellence and growth. This encompasses activities that help ensure dietitians have the knowledge, skills and resources to enter and succeed in their profession, along with forums and networks to build relationships and advance the profession.

These priorities are illustrated as a three-lobe infinity symbol, to represent that the three elements of the plan are interconnected.

All three are supported by a fourth, equally important goal: **Ensure the SUSTAINABILITY of the association.** This involves taking steps to ensure DC has a robust and growing membership base, sufficient revenues and manageable expenses so that we can continue the important work of representing Canadian dietitians.

It is only by nurturing and reinforcing all four elements of the Strategic Plan that we will continue as a strong national association that supports the profession.





Community

Creating an improved member experience

Building a strong and cohesive national organization in which all members feel a sense of purpose and belonging is central to DC's success as a dynamic community of professionals. Over the past year of lockdowns and restrictions, this became more important than ever. To this end, DC has been working to find ways to continue to foster a sense of community for its members.

Commitment to a more diverse and inclusive professional community

Over the past year we have started to examine how DC can build a diverse and inclusive community of dietitians. A top priority was ensuring there was intentional outreach to members from underrepresented groups to participate in volunteer and leadership opportunities, such as the conference planning committee, Nutrition Month and other key association programs. As well, the Board is currently reviewing the nomination process to ensure there is a wider representation of members participating in Board elections. This ongoing work will be embedded in DC policies and processes in the future.

To better understand the profession in Canada, DC is working with others in the dietetic community and has started collecting information from members to be able to understand where change needs to happen so that the profession grows to reflect the diversity of the Canadian population.

We know that much more needs to be done to address longstanding and systemic inequities. DC is currently identifying and prioritizing how we can influence change and increase diversity in the profession. This includes addressing systemic racism and other forms of oppression that impact entry into the profession and contributing to the ongoing education of dietitians — both current and incoming — to provide culturally safe and anti-oppressive care.

DC Networks provide leadership, professional connection and skills

The 21 DC Networks are an important contributor to the DC member community. They offer valuable professional development and networking opportunities and unite members who have a common professional interest. A total of 77 members served on the executive of a DC Network this past year, contributing their time, leadership and expertise towards community-building activities. Here are a few highlights.

The **Consulting Dietitians Network** held their first **Entrepreneurial Summit** in February 2021, connecting more than 200 dietitians interested in starting or growing a consulting practice. Sessions covered topics such as establishing a brand, building a profitable business and operating a virtual practice. The summit was so popular that the Network plans to make this an annual event.





DC Network Highlights

35+

network webinars

700+

webinar participants

2,000+

members in DC networks



In July 2020, the **Sustainable Food Systems Leadership Team (SFS)** completed **The Role of Dietitians in Sustainable Food Systems and Sustainable Diets**, which identifies roles and recommends actions for dietitians to effect positive change in this area. A DC Network was established to bring interested members together. The new **Sustainable Food Systems Network** is a growing community with well over 100 members. The first Network webinar was held in December 2020 and there are many more initiatives to come from this vital community.

A **Network Evolution Advisory Committee** was convened in September 2020. This group of nine Network leaders has been actively revising the Network policy manual and will continue to provide guidance to ensure that all DC Networks adopt consistent policies, offerings and structure.

DC member Networks are a great way to get involved in your area of interest, or find a mentor in a new area. Connect to a **DC Network**.

Practice Blog is rich with insights

The DC Practice Blog has been around for more than a decade, having started life as a print article. In its online form, it continues to be a source of insights and inspiration, with new content posted regularly by members. Recent notable posts include:

- **Coping through COVID** – Every profession has had its share of pandemic challenges. In this post, Lindsay Chan looks at how some of our colleagues responded to COVID-19, whether by problem solving, volunteering, upskilling, redeploying or supporting one another.
- **Remembering a trailblazer** – Cecily Alexander looks back on the life of friend and mentor Judith Blake, who came to Canada from Dominica in 1958 to complete her nutrition degree. This post is a fascinating look at the career of a pioneer and mentor who was an early champion of dietitians of colour. It’s an important reminder of how far we’ve come — and have yet to go.
- **Dining with David Suzuki** – In this Q&A by Emily Ho, Nicole Fetterly recalls the stress and satisfaction of serving lunch to the Canadian icon prior to interviewing him. She then dishes up a few secrets for successful media interviews.

If you haven’t checked in lately, we urge you to have a look and **learn from your colleagues**.



Voice

Ensuring our profession is valued and heard

An important component of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan is to raise the profile of the profession and ensure that dietitians' contributions are valued. As the pandemic changed the way we lived and worked over the past year, the format of many of these activities had to adapt. In some instances, this created new opportunities that enriched the experience.

Advocacy work supports contributions of dietitians

As the national voice of dietitians, advocacy is a core part of DC's work, and we were supported in this by 97 members who directly contributed their time and talent to the **DC advocacy agenda**.

This work involves building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with other national organizations to strengthen our influence on issues of concern to dietitians. For example, DC participated in the HEAL (Organizations for Health Action) COVID-19 Task Force alongside the other Canadian health professional associations in the coalition. Represented by Lisa McKellar, we were able to ensure that concerns facing dietitians were heard by the federal government.

Another success through DC's collaboration with HEAL occurred when the federal Health Standards Organization (HSO) announced its intention to develop National Standards in Long-Term Care, heeding the recommendation in HEAL's consensus document, **Beyond COVID-19**, and the call that dietitians have long made in this area.

For some time now, DC has voiced concerns about the availability of dietitian coverage on extended health benefits plans. Over the past year, it has become especially important to ensure that employers and the public are aware that dietitians can counsel patients virtually, and that they are covered under many employer health plans. Steps taken to facilitate this have included a virtual practice feature on **Find a Dietitian**, a social media toolkit for private practice dietitians and a digital communication campaign targeting the public. The DC Extended Health Benefits Advocacy (EHBA) advisory committee is working to further the availability of dietitian coverage on employer health plans, with the help of a consultant, through a tailored strategy targeting the insurance industry, which will be ongoing in the coming months.

During these challenging times, DC has also been actively involved in advocating to the federal government for improved pandemic benefits to help private practice dietitians sustain their business and for support to aid students who are unable to find placements or repay student loans.



Nutrition Month Highlights

219

media stories

34 m

media reach

+37%

UnlockFood.ca visits

+27%

Find a Dietitian visits

Unlockfood.ca Highlights

6.5 m

page views (past year)

+15%

total page views

+17%

French page views

+20%

users



Nutrition Month reaches wider audience

The 2021 Nutrition Month campaign “Good for you! Dietitians help you find your healthy” focused on the fact that healthy eating looks different for everyone. The campaign demonstrated that dietitians take into consideration culture, food traditions, personal circumstances, nutritional needs and more when providing advice and guidance.

The multi-channel campaign included media relations, new web resources, member-generated content and digital ads. The Activity and Ideas Guide and Social Media Toolkit provided information about the theme, along with resources, activity ideas and story suggestions for newsletters, local media and social media. A new **recipe e-book** offered an enticing collection of dishes influenced by the Nutrition Month theme, along with tips and ideas from DC members.

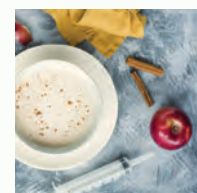
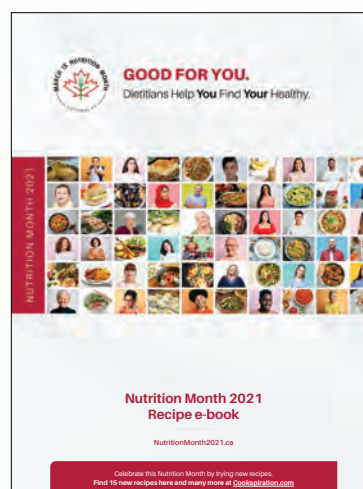
The 2021 Nutrition Month campaign was one of the most successful to date, with a significant increase in audience reach over last year.

Connecting with more Canadians

In recent years, DC’s bilingual public education website unlockfood.ca has enjoyed increased interest from Canadians in every province. And during this past year, as more people (including many dietitians) worked from home and spent more time online, we noticed a large uptick in interest about dietitians.

The **About Dietitians** section has been updated with new content that helps the public better understand what dietitians do, how they can help and where to find a dietitian. The new content received more than 46,000 page views in just four months.

As part of the advocacy strategy to ensure Canadians can access dietitian services through their extended health benefits, a targeted Facebook campaign was launched in January 2021. The campaign message focused on the confusion around food and nutrition and promoted dietitians as the solution. In addition to taking viewers to unlockfood.ca, the campaign also encouraged people to check whether their employee benefits cover dietitian services.





Support

Providing career-enhancing opportunities

As part of our work to ensure that dietitians have the skills and resources to succeed in their profession, DC provides many educational and networking opportunities. These include the annual conference, **PEN: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition®** and the **Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research** — resources made even more important by pandemic restrictions over the past year.

Conference 2020 pivots to virtual

The annual National DC Conference provides education and insights on the most pressing current issues in the profession, along with highly valued networking opportunities.

Last year conference organizers had to make an unexpected switch from the planned in-person event to a virtual one. To support participation, the 2020 conference was hosted across nine consecutive Wednesdays from May 27 to July 29. Free registration for DC members provided relief during a financially challenging time. Each session included two 75-minute presentations, a short presentation from the Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research (CFDR) and recognition of award recipients. In addition, the event offered four three-hour Braindate sessions, Dietetic Educator meetings and a virtual exhibit for sponsors, in addition to AGM business sessions.

A total of 2,050 delegates registered — essentially doubling the participation rate of the previous year's conference. The event received a 96% satisfaction rating, indicating that the quick pivot to the new medium was a success. Although the virtual format didn't allow for spontaneous interactions that build connections, the convenience and lower cost enabled more people to attend. It also attracted delegates from 14 other countries, including Iceland, India, Kuwait, New Zealand and Qatar. The most popular sessions:

1. Diets for diabetes: evidence and controversies
2. Cannabinoids 101
3. The effects of internalized weight stigma
4. From theory to table: spotlight on culinary nutrition interventions
5. Federal nutrition and healthy eating update

These are now available through [**Learning on Demand**](#).

DC's journal a valued member benefit

It's been an exciting year at the Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research (CJDPR). Naomi Cahill, PhD, RD, became the new editor of the flagship publication and in October 2020, a newly designed website was launched. In 2020-21 the CJDPR enjoyed more than 65,000 accesses and 100 article submissions. In Volume 81 (2020, issues 1-4), the journal published 34 articles (see content breakdown in sidebar).



CJDPR Highlights

15

original research articles

11

Perspectives in Practice

6

short reports

2

open access articles



The PEN® System remains the “Global Resource for Nutrition Practice” with more than 20,000 users in 185 countries worldwide. Did you know that content is peer reviewed by an international team of dietitians before it’s published?



Publishing the CJ DPR requires the hard work of a great many people. In addition to staff, 145 authors/co-authors and 105 volunteer peer reviewers (80 of whom were DC members or past members) were involved this year.

The journal is one of the top five most valued benefits of DC membership. In addition to receiving a free subscription, DC members who wish to publish their article as open access now receive a discounted rate of 50% off the standard non-member fee.

PEN® System a mighty resource to support dietitians

Another DC benefit that ranks among members’ top five is access to PEN: Practiced-based Evidence in Nutrition®. Members receive 50 free access credits a year, with the option to purchase additional credits as needed. Satisfaction ratings remain high, with 89% saying they are satisfied or very satisfied.

From March to May 2020, open access to the PEN System helped dietitians combat the misinformation associated with COVID-19 and ensure they had continued access as more people began working from home.

The PEN System is constantly evolving to meet practice needs and reflect the best available evidence. Over the past year, **24** Knowledge Pathways, **167** Practice Questions, **17** Backgrounds, **283** Client and Professional Tools, and **10** Trending Topics were added or updated. During the same period, the system logged more than **422,000** sessions and more than **2.8 million** page views. Popular new content included:

- Intestinal permeability
- Kombucha tea
- Dietary patterns for managing heart failure
- Supplements for the prevention or treatment of cognitive decline
- Health outcomes associated with vegetarian, vegan and raw food diets

Thank you to the 23 DC members who contributed as authors or reviewers.

Revised competencies reflect profession’s evolution

The **ICDEP version 3.0** was officially released by the Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP) in July 2020. This revision captures the evolution of dietetic practice over the last few years.

The competencies represent the most comprehensive description of the entry-level knowledge, skills and judgment needed to practice dietetics safely, ethically and effectively in Canada. The updates were made with inputs from all PDEP members, including DC, The Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies and dietetic educators from academic and practicum programs across Canada.



Sustainability

Supporting members today and into the future

The foundation of the Strategic Plan is organizational sustainability — ensuring that DC is a strong and stable organization with the financial resources to continue into the future. At the heart of sustainability is the growth and involvement of the DC member base.

Membership is increasing

For the first time in recent years, the number of DC members has increased. Membership at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year reached 4,915 — and our community continues to grow. This is the result of a deliberate strategy aimed at removing the barriers to membership. Over the past year, DC has:

- Reduced annual fees for all member categories
- Simplified membership structure
- Initiated a common renewal date
- Increased member benefits
- Targeted students and young professionals in a membership drive campaign

The upward trend is a significant step towards ensuring the longevity and vibrancy of the organization and DC staff will be engaging in additional campaigns in the coming year to continue this positive momentum.



Member contributions are highly valued

DC members have always been an exceedingly committed and enthusiastic group, with a great many participating on committees, leading DC Networks and getting involved in advocacy work.

Over the past year, more than 600 member volunteers contributed their time and expertise to the DC Board of Directors, the PEN® System, CJDPR, the member awards program, DC Networks and professional development activities, PDEP, Nutrition Month, and more. It is thanks to the hard work of the volunteers that much of DC's work is possible. Your involvement is deeply appreciated.

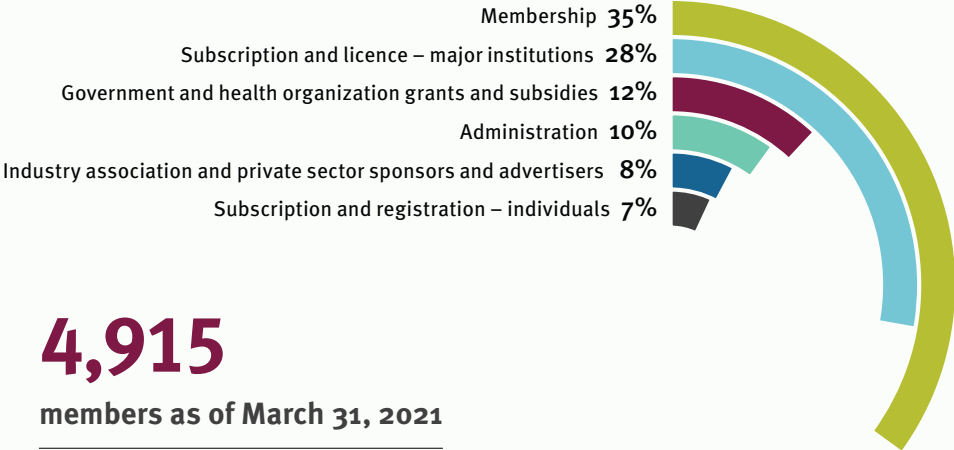
A leaner, more focused national association

As of July 1, 2020, Dietitians of Canada reorganized into a leaner, more focused national professional association and made the decision to reduce staff and streamline services and programs. These changes helped reduce operating expenses, with the goal of ensuring that DC can continue to be financially viable. The most valued member benefits have been continued, and the team at DC is focusing on addressing the national priorities, projects and programs to support its renewed role as the national voice of Canadian dietitians.



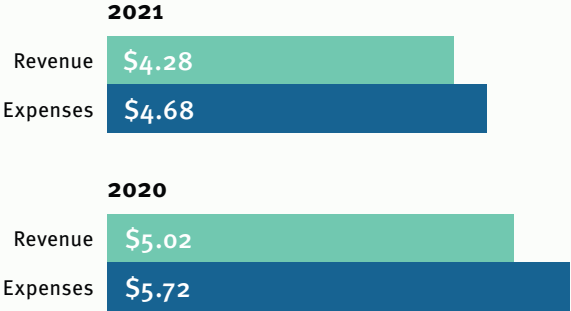
Financial summary

Revenue Allocation 2020-21

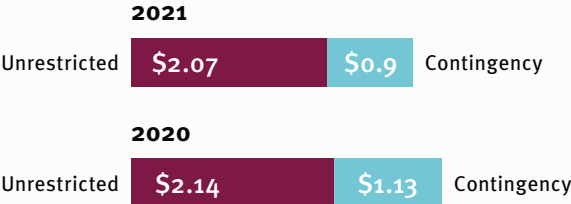


4,915
members as of March 31, 2021

Revenue and Expenses (\$ millions)



Balance of Funds (\$ millions)



To view the March 31, 2021 Audited Financial Statements, please log in to the member section of dietitians.ca/Board.

2020 Member Achievement Awards

During our virtual National Conference in June 2020, we recognized DC members for their outstanding achievements in leadership, professional practice, research, education and entrepreneurship. Congratulations to all award recipients and thank you for your contributions to the profession.

Association Awards

DC Fellows

Andrea Miller
Glendora Boland

Member Recognition Awards

Association Catalyst

Amanda Beales
Jennifer Brown
Carol Clarke
Amanda Hamel
Colinda Hunter
Shauna Kime
Roberta Larsen
Lindsey Mazur
Mireille Najm
Piraveena Piremathasan
Suja Varghese

Innovation

Charlotte Pilat-Burns
Anne-Julie Tessier

Leadership

Noreen Aslam
Karrie Bedford
Arlene Crystal
Margaret De Melo
Michelle Keeling
Natalie Millar
Lana Moore
Tori Simons
Carla Speidel
Jennifer Wojcik

PEN® Achiever Award

Dr. Paula Brauer

Student Awards (Undergraduate)

Kendyl Stretch
(Sponsored by Dietitians of Canada)
Kristen Sunstrum
(Sponsored by Dietitians of Canada)

We also send our congratulations to the 2021 award winners, announced in June at the 2021 Virtual Conference. Consider applying for an award in 2022 or nominate someone who inspires you! To learn more, visit dietitians.ca/awards.

Ryley-Jeffs Memorial Award 2020



Dr. Debbie MacLellan

Dr. MacLellan has been an innovator in dietetic education at the University of Prince Edward Island, overseeing the renewal and refocusing of the program to prepare students for the future of dietetic practice. She has held high-profile positions including the Dean of Science of UPEI and President of the University of Canada in Cairo. She co-led the development of an internationally accepted definition of evidence-based practice using a DELPHI process and input from dietitians from across the globe, a first for dietetics.

Due to changes to conference 2020 and 2021 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. MacLellan's lecture was presented virtually in 2021. This, and previous Ryley-Jeffs Lectures, are free to DC members on [Learning on Demand](#).

Emeritus Member Awards

These awards recognize recipients for their significant contributions to the advancement of dietetics throughout their careers.



Mary Bush



Jean Coleman



Susan Whiting

Honourary Patron Award

This award recognizes someone who is not a dietitian but has advanced the dietetics profession through their work.



Ellen Pruden

Morgan Awards

The Morgan Awards are presented in memory of the late Susan Morgan. They recognize the personal achievement of a dietetic intern or practicum student for a research project. In 2020, we were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Beth Armour, a DC colleague and a lifelong friend of Susan Morgan. To commemorate their inspiring bond of friendship, a group of DC members has been working towards developing an award in honour of both Beth and Susan. More to come in Fall 2021.

Morgan Medal

Qianxi Tang

Morgan Awards

Lydia Tegwyn Mosher
Haileigh Robb
Ilan Wright



About Us

Dietitians are driven by a curiosity to understand the science behind food and its connection to health. Dietitians of Canada is the professional association for dietitians, representing members at the national level. We aim to advance health through food and nutrition and to provide leadership in shaping food and nutrition policy.

Dietitians of Canada

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