Leaders in advancing health through food and nutrition

2009–2010
This year, Dietitians of Canada made a purposeful effort to find examples of our members as leaders in their profession and their communities, all across the country and on into the world. No surprise, we found them everywhere we looked.

The stories we heard at member events across the country were inspirations to all of us. You’ll see many of them featured in this report — examples of dietitians showing leadership in taking on today’s hot topics and helping to change public policy; advocating for the quality of our food supply; teaching about healthy environments and raising awareness about how our profession contributes to public health at world-class events like the 2010 Olympics and during Nutrition Month, our own public awareness campaign.

In every way, DC had another successful year as an organization. But there are always new challenges to face and new opportunities to pursue. Vision 2020 has provided a snap shot of members’ aspirations for our organization. We’ll continue to refer to it as we set priorities and measure our progress in the days ahead.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, let me say how privileged we are to be working with the DC members, volunteers and professionals who contribute so much, not just to the reputation of our organization, but to the profile of our profession all across the country. We sincerely thank each and every one of you for making membership in our organization a part of who you are.

Dietitians of Canada members can access the following documents and information in the Members Only section of the website (www.dietitians.ca):

- 2009-10 Financial Statement and Auditor’s Report
- 2009-13 Strategic Plan
2009 – 2010

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Building your knowledge

For dietitians, the learning never stops. DC makes it easier for dietitians to get the evidence-based professional development and support they need.

PEN: the gold standard for dietitians in Canada and abroad
The PEN knowledge base just gets bigger and better. This information warehouse now holds 143 knowledge pathways, over 3200 professional and client tools and more than a hundred client-handouts in French and English.

PEN now exceeds targets set by BC and Ontario for provincial dietitian contact centres, with answers to more than 90 per cent of the questions callers ask.

The BC Ministry of Health, Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion and Alberta SEARCH Program for long-term care services use PEN as their knowledge database. Now PEN is going international, too. Agreement has been reached with the British Dietetic Association for an international PEN partnership and we are exploring one with the Dietitians Association of Australia.

Travelling workshops visit Canadian cities
Led by Canadian dietitian experts, three workshops went city-to-city and coast-to-coast. Five hundred delegates in seven Canadian cities flocked to hear Dr. Susan Barr answer the question: Is It Time for an 'Assault on Salt'? Respected allergy expert Dr. Janice Joneja spoke to 450 delegates in 10 cities about Dietetic Practice in the Management of Adverse Reaction to Food.

Dr. Catherine Field wowed delegates with her knowledge of the Role of Nutrition in the Immune System at 10 sites, with additional video-conferencing locations.

Going the distance – technology supports professional development

- Podcasts of eight sessions from the 2009 Conference in Charlottetown were offered free to conference delegates. Several, including Standardized Nutrition Language and the AGM and Awards ceremony, were complimentary to DC members.
- Webcasts included Dr. David Jenkins on improving the palatability of cholesterol-lowering diets and a bilingual session to 1,100 health professionals on the new adapted-for-Canada WHO Growth Charts.
Intensive learning with national and international partners

The 2010 Olympics made sports-nutrition training both timely and topical.

The Sports Dietitians of Australia and DC’s Sport Nutrition Network joined forces to produce an intensive, hands-on, four-day workshop in Victoria. A second program, International Anthropometry Certification, was delivered in conjunction with the International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry.

In Spring 2010, the first four-day Obesity Management Program was offered in collaboration with the Canadian Obesity Network. And, by popular demand, the Critical Appraisal Skills online learning program was again delivered with the Centre for Health Evidence at the University of Alberta.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled to represent dietitians across the country and work in collaboration with the best sport dietitians of Canada.”

– Mélanie Olivier

Dietitian leaders spotlighted during Olympics

The media picked up DC’s news release showcasing dietitians as healthy-eating contributors to the Olympic Winter Games.

**Nanci S. Guest** was Director of Sport Nutrition for VANOC and supervising dietitian in the Athletes’ Village.

**Mélanie Olivier** was the Official Dietitian of the Canadian Olympic Committee.

**Jennifer Gibson**, dietitian to Maëlle Ricker, 2010 Olympic Team Canada Snowboarder and Gold Medal Winner.

**Angela Dufour** managed food service for Hockey Canada’s largest free-standing pavilion for athletes.
Raising your profile

Every day, dietitians lead in the media, on the Web and in the community.

Dietitians help communities access healthy foods

- In **Atlantic Canada**, dietitians supported youth in choosing healthy foods in recreational settings.
- In **Quebec**, DC partnered with the Fédération québécoise du sport étudiant, Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation for the *Coeur et berlingot* Awards.
- In **Ontario**, DC reviewed curriculum documents in health and physical education and social sciences, with help from the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health and the Ontario Collaborative Group for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.
- In **Alberta**, our members increased access to healthy foods for food-insecure populations.
- In **Manitoba** and **British Columbia**, resources and tools were developed to help schools implement provincial governments’ nutrition guidelines.

Dietitians promote health through food and nutrition

- **nutritionDay in Canada.** Canada launched this international initiative in eight health care facilities on January 21st. We joined 27 countries in the European Union, three in South America, as well as Israel and Japan in calling attention to the impact of malnutrition on patient outcomes and recovery.
- **Advertising of Food and Beverages to Children.** DC’s latest discussion paper synthesizes the evidence of the impact that media advertising has on children’s food habits and presents dietitians’ position on the issue.
- **National Working Group on Dietary Sodium Reduction.** Together with Health Canada and multi-sectoral collaborators, we’re finding new strategies to reduce Canadians’ sodium intake.

Dietitians team up for more impact

- Led by Dietitians of Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the College of Family Physicians, and Community Health Nurses of Canada produced a **Collaborative Statement on Growth Monitoring of Children**. The news release had a potential circulation of 40 million.
- DC and the Canadian Obesity Network began work with the diet industry to establish best-practice guiding principles for commercial weight-management programs.
- Leadership from dietitians prompted government to reconsider a proposed policy on the discretionary fortification of foods. Six other influential health organizations supported DC’s position.
- DC began leading a pilot project that will improve access to nutritional data on manufactured and processed foods for Canadian consumers, health professionals, researchers and governments.

“I am so impressed with the Nutrition Month 2010 Resource Manual. It contains information that I have searched for...many times.”
– Lisa Cianfrini, London, ON

With leadership from DC, WHO Growth Charts adapted for use in Canada.
International Acclaim

The International Union of Nutritional Sciences task force on evidence-based nutrition has identified DC as a leader in evidence-based practice and invited us to contribute to their work. International Confederation of Dietetic Associations invited DC to appoint two of our leaders - Jayne Thirsk and Debbie MacLellan - to chair a committee with representatives from 15 dietetic associations around the world to develop an international definition of evidence-based dietetic practice.

Dietitians get the message out

- **2010 Nutrition Month Campaign.** Canadians want to know more about the food they eat. So this year’s campaign meant dietitians were there to help guide them, with 33 million media impressions and almost 350 media stories. National exposure was also provided by the National Post (200,000 readers) and MacLeans/L’Actualité (3.7 million readers).

- **National Dietitians’ Day, March 17.** A new way we celebrated dietitians and their contributions to Canadians’ health and fitness this year.

- **EatRight Ontario.** DC and the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion launched the EatRight Ontario Kids Recipe Challenge. Winners and their submissions were profiled during Nutrition Month.

- Dairy Farmers of Canada partnered with dietitians from each DC region to encourage Canadians to “Get Enough” of all the basic food groups. The campaign generated nearly 10 million media impressions.

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Jillyan Jay (right), Leader in Nutrition, with consumer.

Stéphanie Côté, Leader in Nutrition Communications.
Creating more opportunities

Dietitians are looking for new ways to strengthen and advance their practice and positively impact the health of Canadians.

Addressing the dietetic workforce challenge

- All provinces (Quebec pending) completed workforce surveys between 2007 and 2009 to help assess the national shortage of dietitians.
- BC completed a dietitian forecast to 2021 in partnership with the provincial government and the Health Employers Association of BC.
- Ontario was funded to look at new models of practicum training and implement 28 new practicum positions.
- Newfoundland encouraged government and university-level decision makers to reinstate the dietetics program at Memorial University.

Teaming up to move forward

The Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice, which includes the Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies, Dietitians of Canada and dietetic educators have joined forces to:

- develop the partnership structure;
- create integrated competencies for dietetic education and practice;
- produce a strategic framework and plan for scholarly inquiry; and
- start work to enhance capacity in dietetics and training.

Helen Haresign, Eat Right Ontario Program Director, demonstrates My MenuPlanner web tool for Ontario ministers Margaret Best (left), Health Promotion, and Deb Matthews (centre), Health and Long-Term Care.

Linda Clark, Leader in Food Services Management.
Advanced practice

There’s ample evidence to support the continuation of Advanced Level Practice. The Spring 2010 Journal published an important article: *Towards construction of a definition, description and framework for advanced practice in dietetics* by Deborah E (Boyko) Wildish, Susan Evers.

More Canadians have access to dietitians

- Now in its third year, the Ontario Dietitian Advisory Service, piloted by DC for the Ministry of Health Promotion, provides more and better information about chronic disease prevention and management.
- DC’s *Role of the Dietitian in Primary Health Care* paper made a persuasive case for the value of dietitians in interprofessional teams. Input was also provided to the College of Family Physicians of Canada’s discussion document entitled *Patient-Centred Primary Care in Canada: Bring It on Home*, and the BC and Ontario regions supported local action groups on primary health care.
- The Pan Canadian Task Force on Public Health Nutrition Practice confirmed the definition for practice and discipline-specific competencies. Read its reports at www.dietitians.ca/publichealthnutrition
- The Consulting Network now has a tool to support advocacy efforts with health insurance providers and employers. *Dietitians Make the Difference* is posted at www.dietitians.ca/effectiveness
- Ontario dietitians successfully campaigned for improved support in long term care nutrition services and for the ability to practice to their full scope of practice.

Canadian dietitians support International Dietetics and Nutrition Terminology (IDNT)

As a member of the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations (ICDA), DC is promoting IDNT to Canadian dietitians. Orientation to IDNT was provided at the 2009 Conference and made available to all members as a podcast.

Our professional profile grows in the Canadian health system when dietitians demonstrate their value. One way we can do this is to highlight the population, group and individual health outcomes that are most influenced by our work. Awareness of the IDNT has been raised with Infoway, the Electronic Health Record (E-HR) standards-setting organization in Canada. Thank you for doing your part.
A new web experience

Coming October 2010.