



National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers in Western Australia

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The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the national association of the dietetic profession with over 6000 members, and branches in each state and territory. DAA is a leader in nutrition and advocates for food and nutrition for healthier people and healthier nations. DAA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers in Western Australia by the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO).

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DAA interest in this consultation

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the peak body for the dietetic profession in Australia and has had measures in place for many years to ensure public health and safety. The Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program is the foundation for self-regulation of the profession. DAA is a member of the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions.

Please note the correct spelling of dietitian, consistent with international convention by the profession, is with a 't'. We request that this spelling is used in documents published by HaDSCO.

Recommendations

Greater recognition of self regulating professions

DAA would like to see greater recognition self regulating professions in the implementation of the National Code by HaDSCO. As a self regulating profession, DAA has effective measures in place to protect the public with standards of conduct and practice across all practice settings. In fact, the existence of such measures was one of the reasons why health ministers did not regulate the dietetic profession under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

Relationship between codes

The National Code of Conduct for Health Workers by individual states and territories is additional to other codes, including profession specific codes and the Quality and Safeguarding Framework for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The existence of multiple codes has the potential to be confusing and to reduce compliance as health workers are expected to be aware of numerous codes.

DAA recommends that a comprehensive communication plan be implemented initially and on an ongoing basis to promote compliance with all codes. Communication should also aim to improve the awareness across government departments, including health and disability agencies, of the professions regulated under the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme, the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions and unregulated professions. At present the level of understanding is poor and leads to adverse consequences for professions not regulated under the National Regulation and Accreditation Scheme.

Communication between regulators

It is unclear what the relationship is between the various codes and the administration of the codes. More specifically, what actions and processes will occur if a breach of the National Code is alleged, or where a practitioner has been found culpable. DAA recommends that HaDSCO provide clarification of the actions and communications between state and territories bodies responsible for implementation of the National Code and with self regulating professions in the case of disciplinary action or of a prohibition order being issued.



About the Dietitians Association of Australia

- [DAA](#) is the leading body for nutrition professionals and the national association of the dietetic profession with branches in each State/Territory. It has been nationally organised since 1976. DAA is a member of the [National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions and Allied Health Professions Australia](#).
- The Association has over 6000 members constituting approximately 80 percent of the dietetic workforce in Australia.
- DAA was approved in 1999 by the Australian Government Department of Employment Training and Youth Affairs as the [assessing authority](#) for dietitians trained in other countries, and prior to this advised the Australian Government on recognition of dietitians trained overseas.
- DAA has [accredited dietetic training courses](#) in Australian universities since 1984.
- The interests of dietitians are broad and derive from training in three dominant areas of practice i.e. individual case management of medical nutrition therapy (clinical care), community and public health nutrition, and food service management.

About the Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) program

- The [Accredited Practising Dietitian \(APD\) program](#) is the foundation of DAA as a self-regulated profession with over 98 percent of eligible members participating in the program.
- The APD credential is recognised by Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the NDIS, private health funds and for access to the Healthcare Identifiers Service.
- The APD program meets the requirements of the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions and has similar requirements to professions regulated under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, including
 - Work within scope of practice framework
 - Subject to code of conduct
 - Compliance and disciplinary processes in place
 - Minimum annual continuing professional development required, and subject to audit
 - Resumption of practice requirement
- APDs work in diverse settings including aged care, hospitals, disability, mental health, private practice, public health, community health, food service, food industry, research and teaching.