

May 24, 2017

To: Senator Bob Hackett, Chairman, and Members  
Ohio Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee  
From: Lorna Fuller, MS, RDN, LD  
Training/Human Resource Manager, Sodexo

I am an Ohio licensed dietitian working for Sodexo, the largest private employer of dietitians and provider of Quality of Life services in North America, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 80 countries, Sodexo serves 75 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits and Rewards Services, and Personal and Home Services. Through its more than 100 services, Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over 50 years of experience: from food services, reception, safety, maintenance and cleaning, to facilities and equipment management; from employee engagement and recognition solutions to in-home assistance and concierge services.

Sodexo's success and performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business and financial model, and its ability to continuously develop and to engage the commitment of its 425,000 employees throughout the world. Sodexo has created tremendous job opportunities in Ohio and throughout the world for dietitians and dietetic technicians seeking to get more out of their career. I have first-hand expertise on the licensure relationship to staffing as a past Ohio Board of Dietetics member (5 years) and leader at Sodexo in Recruitment and Human Resource Management/Training since 2004.

I am writing to say that I am opposed to the proposal included in HB 49 that would abolish the Ohio Board of Dietetics which is one of Ohio's most efficient and accessible independent licensure boards. As you know, the healthcare industry depends and relies on the services of many health professionals, including dietitians to provide sound nutritional care and advice to the public. Recruiting and retaining dietitians is becoming increasingly difficult due to an aging population and fewer dietitians going into the profession. Placing dietitians into our open positions is a critical component in recruitment and directly affects our challenge to fill jobs timely and efficiently - especially in smaller accounts where this person might be the only dietitian at the account. Any delays in the process could potentially cause us to lose our top applicant(s) and jeopardize services to consumers who are served by our partners.

It is important for new graduates of dietetics programs to be able to easily access information about the licensure process , get to work quickly after graduation, and to be able to move efficiently to other States as demand for services/staffing changes. The small size of the OBD makes it very accessible for these dietetic professionals to get information about practice issues, and the licensure process almost immediately. Applicants are currently licensed quickly. This will not continue under the huge Ohio State Medical Board that licenses over 80,000 doctors, physicians assistants and other medical practitioners.

It is clear that the proposal in HB 49 will disrupt the efficient employment of licensed dietitians in Ohio. Under the current independent OBD the average number of days to issue a new dietitian license was between 4 and 8.3 days\*. The OSMB's last published data show that it took between 38 and 85 days\*\* to issue new licenses for the Allied Practitioners group (OSMB's fastest group). This would be a dramatic step backwards!

In my previous line of work, I have had an opportunity to place dietitians into positions across the USA (mainly the South) and I will tell you that the delays with some of these licensure boards can cause hardships to companies like ours; and to me it is unacceptable! In one of the states I recruited for, the board only reviewed and approved dietitian license applications when the board actually met. If you missed the window of opportunity (when the board met) hiring of our future employees was delayed - because dietitians could not work unless they were licensed. In another state, the dietetic licensure board was also a sub unit of the medical board. Not only was the cost to obtain a dietitian license substantially higher there than in most states, but the delays again were much longer than what we currently experience in Ohio.

Our company relies on the efficient issuance and transfer of licenses in Ohio (and when moving Ohio staff to other states) in order to practice and maintain critical staffing levels. Delays in licensing increase costs for businesses, make Ohio a less desirable place for companies like Sodexo to pursue contracts, and make it more difficult for dietitian professionals to pursue careers. It does not make sense to take an expensive step backward and move the regulation of dietitians to the Ohio State Medical Board!

I request that the proposal abolishing the Ohio Board of Dietetics be removed from HB 49 and that the board be restored to independent status with full funding for the 2018-2019 biennium.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Respectfully,

*Lorna Fuller* Lorna Fuller, MS, RDN, LD,

