



June 6, 2017

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Pat McKnight, MS, RDN, LD
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RE: HB 49

To say that dietitians are disappointed in the action of the legislature regarding the fate of the Ohio Board of Dietetics and dietitian licensees is an understatement. This is an unnecessary change for probably the most efficient of the health care boards and it **seriously** undermines the purpose of licensure – to protect the public.

I worked with the State Legislature in 1986 to enact Dietetic Licensure. This was done with the encouragement of the Medical Board which was having “issues” with people who appeared to be practicing medicine without a license, but they were using the excuse that they were “practicing nutrition”. At that time licensure for dietitians did not exist. The Medical Board was pleased to have our board established to deal with these issues --- and the Ohio Board of Dietetics has been dealing with these issues appropriately for the last 30 years!

We know that the Medical Board has neither the time nor the expertise to deal with “dietetics issues” so the alternative practitioners who have been trying to do away with us for the last 18 years in a series of bills, will now have free rein to prey on vulnerable Ohioans. In addition to our concern for

the general public, we are concerned because we know medical nutrition therapy as a component of the treatment of chronic disease is complex and needs scientifically educated practitioners to provide appropriate care. Ohioans need to be protected from unqualified persons who see this area as an “opportunity” and will take full advantage of this

The Dietetics Advisory Council as identified in HB 49 would be useless – it does not have members of the dietetics profession with the expertise to deal with dietetic issues – and it has no meeting requirement and no duties. ☹️ Senator Randy Gardner has offered an amendment to strengthen this Council so that it even makes sense.

Our licensees are not happy – they supported licensure to protect the public and they know that is no longer possible. We already have national registration which sets our education, training and continuing education requirements. We don’t need a Board to do this, we need a Board to protect the public by providing education to prevent violations of the law and sanction those who do violate.

We are asking that the Senate support the amendment submitted by Senator Gardner and we expect to monitor and document the Medical Board’s action related to our profession. We will be back to the legislator if there is evidence of need for new legislation.