

August 14, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

As Lead Intensivist, for the Intensive Care Units, of the Niagara Health System, I have become familiar with the integral role our clinical dietitians play as part of the health care team.

I have found the dietitians to make sound judgments when using their knowledge and assessment skills, enabling them to make valuable contributions when in consultation with the interdisciplinary members. This supports best care practice for our patients.

Through various hospital wide and ICU protocols (eg/ MI, CHF, vented/non-vented patient, enteral, parenteral, etc.) the dietitians are able to move patient care ahead in a more timely manner. This allows them to initiate the appropriate therapeutic diet, nutrition support, and in many cases, consultative assessments by other members of the team.

Often, the dietitians request specific lab work or interpret general diet orders to meet the tailored needs of our patients. In consultation with the intensivist, or other physicians, the dietitian manages and orders the patient's enteral and parenteral nutrition. Additional IV supplementation may also be requested. This allows closer monitoring in this specialized area of care.

I would fully advocate a more autonomous role for the dietitians of Ontario, as is in keeping with the full co-operation with the concept of a multidisciplinary approach to patient care; as per the practice of the ICU, for example, and lead by the intensivist.

Sincerely,

Dr. W. Neil Malcolm
Director of Critical Care Services
Niagara Health System