

Right to Refuse Treatment

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Authority: *BC Human Rights Code; CDBC Bylaws, Schedule A: Code of Ethics and Schedule B: Standards of Practice.*

Background: Registered Dietitians are legally entitled to use discretion when accepting or refusing clients but refusal cannot be based on reasons that contravene the *BC Human Rights Code* (age, gender, race, ancestry, religion, marital/family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation, etc.).

Policy: Registered Dietitians may encounter circumstances where they find themselves unable to provide competent, safe and ethical dietetic services because of stress or discomfort, threatening or inappropriate client behaviour, or non-compliance of a client with treatment or payment of services.

When a dietitian is unable to provide safe, competent and ethical treatment, the dietitian has an obligation to:

- inform the client of his or her concerns
- give reasonable notice of termination of treatment and,
- offer alternative options to ensure that the client's nutritional care needs are met.

A dietitian has an ethical duty to provide treatment if refusal to treat or delaying care might result in serious harm to that client.

NOTE: The general principles of this policy are covered in the CDBC Jurisprudence Guide and Examination.

References:

- BC Laws. BC Human Rights Code:
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96210_01;
accessed May 30/16.
- College of Dental Hygienists of BC, Interpretation Guidelines. Refusal to Treat:
<http://www.cdahbc.com/Practice-Resources/Interpretation-Guidelines/Informed-Refusal-to-Consent.aspx>; accessed May 30/16.
- College of Chiropractors of BC. Professional Conduct Handbook. Appendix A. Withdrawing from Patient Care: <http://www.chirobc.com/ccbc/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PCH-Apr-6-2016.pdf>; accessed May 30/16.
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. Public Information. FAQs – Patient/Physician Relationship. <https://www.cpsbc.ca/for-public/faqs/patient-physician-relationships>; accessed May 30/16.