



# DIETITIANS BOARD

## Te Mana Mātanga Mātai Kai

### Dietitian Prescriber Policy

#### Policy Statement

**This document sets out Board policy concerning the role and regulation of Dietitian Prescribers.**

#### **Role of the Dietitian Prescriber**

Dietitians make a nutrition diagnosis which is the identification of an existing nutrition problem that the dietitian is responsible for treating independently. As the only member of the multidisciplinary team with the relevant evidence informed scientific knowledge of nutrition and the composition and use of the nutritional products available on the NZ market, a dietitian is the nutrition expert and therefore uniquely placed to prescribe Special Foods. Dietitians work as key members of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams.

Dietitians who have met the Dietitians Board criteria have their APC endorsed “Dietitian Prescriber” and are authorised to prescribe for supply Special Foods (see Pharmac schedule) and the items listed in Appendix 1. This list of additional items prescribing dietitians may prescribe is also available on the Dietitians Board website (under Practitioners – Prescribing). NZ registered prescribing dietitians are Designated Prescribers.

Note: In this document Dietitian Prescribers Course refers to both the separate post graduate prescribing course (Appendix 2) and to the equivalent course incorporated into the Masters programmes (Appendix 3).

#### **Application process for NZ trained dietitians who graduated before 2014, and overseas registered dietitians**

The following minimum criteria must be met by all applicants:

1. Hold a current annual practising certificate and be practising as a dietitian in an appropriate patient orientated hospital, community or primary care setting in NZ (or Australia).
2. Registered to practise in the domain of clinical dietetics i.e. not limited to practise in Food Service Management.
3. Good professional and personal standing (i.e. no unresolved issue, complaint or competence review in process).
4. Have a prescribing supervisor that the Board considers appropriate to supervise his/her prescribing practice and who is in agreement with their application to prescribe.
5. Complete application form and payment for the Prescribers course.
6. Satisfactory completion of the Dietitian Prescribers Course and test.

## **NOTE:**

Registered dietitians trained overseas must complete 3 months practising as a dietitian in an appropriate patient orientated hospital, community or primary care setting in NZ and obtain supervisor sign off, prior to having their practicing certificate endorsed.

Because the course is only run once a year a practitioner can undertake the prescribing course prior to completing 3 months NZ work experience but they will not have the endorsement placed on their APC until the end of the supervisory period.

### **Application process for dietitians who graduated in NZ after 2014**

The prescribing course is now part of the Masters' course work and assessment, so all new graduate dietitians who have passed the relevant Masters programmes from Massey, Otago, or Auckland Universities and completed registration with the Dietitians Board will now meet the requirements to have their APC endorsed with Dietitian Prescriber. These dietitians may apply for Special Authorities and prescribe Special Foods under supervision, soon after they start practising once the following has been achieved:

- The Board must be advised of the name of an appropriate prescribing supervisor and have received the signed form
- The Registrar will:
  - endorse their Scope of Practice with 'Dietitian Prescriber'
  - send new Dietitian Prescribers the paperwork needed to become a prescriber
  - update the Ministry of Health monthly (name, ID#, scope of practice, conditions, endorsements, current status)

### **Not eligible to apply**

1. Dietitians who have re-entered the workforce after more than 3 years out of practice (until they have practised under supervision for at least 3 months)
2. Dietitians who have had a significant change of practice e.g. food service to clinical (until they have practised under supervision in the clinical domain for at least 3 months).

### **Dietitians Register**

Once approved as an authorised prescriber by the Dietitians Board, authorisation to access the PHARMAC Schedule for Special Foods will be entered on her/his registration details and be added to the Dietitians Board public register. This Register is published in accordance with part 6, s138 (1) and s149 of the HPCA Act 2003.

### **Resource and data management**

The Dietitians Board will maintain a "Dietitian Prescriber" list in their database with information about the first year of certification for prescribing and a record of subsequent annual online recertification.

### **Prescribing supervision**

All prescribing dietitians must have a prescribing supervisor. A prescribing supervisor must be a prescribing dietitian with a minimum of 3 years clinical experience in New Zealand. If their practice supervisor is a prescribing dietitian then they can also be their prescribing supervisor (i.e. the same dietitian for both types of supervisor).

If the dietitian's supervisor is not endorsed as a Dietitian Prescriber, the dietitian will also need a prescribing supervisor. This could be a prescribing dietitian, a medical practitioner or other health professional with prescribing rights, such as a nurse, or a pharmacist with a good knowledge of nutrition and the composition of Special Foods.

Prescribing supervisors need to supervise the dietitian's prescribing practice; they are also someone to go to with queries. Regular review (e.g. 3 monthly) of prescriptions written and cases is recommended. This is particularly important for new prescribers. There are no specific reporting back requirements except for new graduates and overseas trained dietitians, unless the supervisor has concerns.

The Board must be notified of any change to prescribing supervisors.

### **Annual Practising Certificate endorsement, annual update and recertification procedures**

All dietitians are required to be familiar with contemporary research and clinical developments in their area of practice. For a prescribing dietitian, this includes an up to date knowledge of the use of Special Foods.

To maintain prescribing rights and recertification by the Dietitians Board, all prescribing dietitians are required to complete an online annual prescribing update via Moodle before 15 February each year.

If a dietitian is not currently prescribing but wishes to maintain the Dietitian Prescriber endorsement, they will need to have a prescribing supervisor with whom to discuss prescribing using annual Moodle update material and hypothetical cases, and pass the online Moodle update test each year.

A dietitian, who has passed the prescribing course, and has been a prescribing dietitian and is later inactive or is not endorsed as a prescriber **for less than 3 years**, will need to pass the annual Moodle prescribing update course prior to becoming a Dietitian Prescriber again. They will be required to have prescribing supervision including goals and evidence submitted as part of their My CCP.

A dietitian, who has passed the prescribing course, and has been a prescribing dietitian and is later inactive or is not endorsed as a prescriber **for more than 3 years**, will need to attend the Prescribing course again and re-sit the post-course test. They will be required to have prescribing supervision including goals and evidence submitted as part of their My CCP.

If a new graduate dietitian does not wish to be endorsed a Dietitian Prescriber, even though they will have successfully completed the course as part of their Masters programme, then the endorsement can be removed, and no annual Moodle prescribing online update test needs to be undertaken. However this is not recommended as they will need to do the Prescribing course again and re-sit the post-course test, should they wish to prescribe in the future, even if less than 3 years has elapsed. It is recommended they maintain the Dietitian Prescriber endorsement, by discussing prescribing using the annual Moodle update material and hypothetical cases with their prescribing supervisor and passing the online Moodle test each year.

### **Audit of dietitian prescribers**

Records of dietitians' prescriptions written are obtained from Ministry of Health for auditing by the Dietitian's Board.

The Dietitian's Board will include at least 2 prescribing dietitians.

### **Provision of on-going prescriptions**

Medicine Regulations (1984) restrict prescribing to the treatment of patients under the prescriber's care. This also applies to dietitians, who can only provide prescriptions for patients who are directly under their care. This means an inpatient or outpatient receiving ongoing care (i.e. next appointment booked with the dietitian) or if you are a locum the patient is a current patient of the dietitian you are covering.

All other patients need to obtain their prescriptions from their medical practitioner.

### **Compliance**

The HPCA Act contains strong sanctions to prevent health practitioners from practising outside their scopes of practice. A dietitian who is found to prescribe outside the boundaries of their annual practising certificate will be investigated and could be prosecuted before the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal under the provisions of section 100 of the Act.

### **Communication with other healthcare providers**

It is standard practice for dietitians to communicate in writing with the referrer and with the patient's General Practitioner about the assessment, diagnosis, nutrition intervention, education and follow up plan for every patient they see. This communication must include information about any Special Food, supplement or other product recommended and prescribed.

### **Authority to apply for Special Authority Benefits for Special Foods**

Dietitians can apply for Special Authority for Special Food Benefits electronically.

It is recommended that only specialist dietitians practising in a quaternary or metabolic specialist services write prescriptions and apply for Special Authority for Special Food Benefits for the following Special Foods:

- SA 1098 Paediatric Product For Children Awaiting Liver Transplant: Heparon Junior
- SA 1099 Paediatric Product For Children With Chronic Renal Failure: Kindergen
- SA 1108 Food and Supplements for Inborn Errors of Metabolism

