How did CDR identify obesity and weight management as the practice area for a new specialist certification?

The Academy’s Council on Future Practice has an established specialist certification petition process. In fall 2012, the Diabetes Care and Education and Weight Management Dietetic Practice Groups submitted a petition to the Council for the establishment of a new specialist certification for registered dietitian nutritionists practicing in the area of obesity and weight management. The Council approved this petition in July 2013 and requested that CDR move forward with implementation. CDR concurred, and in July 2013, CDR established a certification development timeline and selected the new specialist certification designation, Board Certified Specialist in Obesity and Weight Management (CSOWM).

Who asked CDR to offer this new certification as an interdisciplinary specialist certification?

In August 2013, CDR received a request from representatives of the Weight Management and Diabetes Care and Education Dietetics Dietetic Practice Groups and The Obesity Society to consider offering the new specialist certification as an interdisciplinary certification. CDR met with representatives of The Obesity Society and the two dietetics practice groups during FNCE 2013.

Following this meeting, CDR appointed a Task Force, including representatives from both the Council on Future Practice and Academy’s Board of Directors, to consider all facets of the recommendation. CDR established an email address for receipt of comments regarding this proposal. The e-mail address was included in the CDR Spring 2014 House of Delegates report. After careful consideration of the pros and cons and member input, the Task Force and CDR concurred on the decision to move forward on the development of the Board Certified Specialist in Obesity and Weight Management as an interdisciplinary certification.

Why did CDR make the decision to offer the Board Certified Specialist in Obesity and Weight Management as an Interdisciplinary Certification?

The CDR Task Force, charged to evaluate all facets of this request, gathered information from multiple sources. After reviewing this information, the Task Force identified the following key considerations supporting the recommendation for an interdisciplinary specialist certification:
The new Interdisciplinary Specialist Certification in Obesity and Weight Management meets CDRs mission to administer rigorous, valid, and reliable credentialing processes to protect the public and meet the needs of CDR credentialed practitioners, employers, and consumers.

The need for professionals trained in obesity and weight management exceeds the dietetic profession’s capacity to provide this care. With only one RDN for every 8,000 U.S. residents, it is not possible to adequately address the multifaceted aspects of this health crisis independently.

The Institute of Medicine, and other national leaders in healthcare, have repeatedly underscored the importance of interdisciplinary care. It is critical that the dietetics profession be a leader in the promotion of interdisciplinary care.

Existing dietetics-related interdisciplinary specialist certifications, such as Certified Diabetes Education (CDE) and Certified Nutrition Support Clinician (CNSC), are valued by the registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) who hold them and are well-recognized in the marketplace, in large part because significant numbers of allied health professionals also hold these certifications.

The treatment of obesity and weight management involves more than nutrition interventions. It is a multifactorial disease requiring interdisciplinary solutions.

Who is involved in the development of this new specialist certification?

As the first step in the development of this new certification, CDR has appointed an Interdisciplinary Specialist Certification Practice Analysis Task Force. The Task Force includes the following representatives: registered dietitian nutritionists, physician assistants, licensed clinical social worker, licensed behavioral psychologists/therapists, nurse practitioners and exercise physiologists.

This Task Force has been working since January 2015 to develop a practice analysis survey instrument. The practice analysis will survey practitioners in each profession to determine their involvement in obesity and weight management practice tasks. The results of the analysis will be used to establish the content outline for the certification examination, to determine certification eligibility requirements, and to determine which of the aforementioned professionals will be eligible for the certification.

Are all the professions included on this Practice Analysis Task Force eligible for the new specialist certification?

No. The determination of who is eligible for the new certification will be based on the results of the practice analysis.
Will other professions, such as pharmacists, be included in the future?

CDR’s external accreditation agency, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, requires that a practice analysis be conducted every five years. Other professions may be considered for inclusion in the practice analysis population in the future.

When will the first examination be administered?

CDR anticipates that the first examination will be administered in late Fall 2016.

Where can questions and/or comments be sent regarding the Interdisciplinary Specialist Certification in Obesity and Weight Management credential?

All inquiries regarding the new interdisciplinary certification can be sent to interdisciplinary@eatright.org.