

Understanding the Right of Clients to Make an Informed Decision



Melisse L. Willems, MA, LLB
Registrar & ED

COLLEGE VALUES

Integrity

Collaboration

Accountability

Transparency

Innovation

This year, the College's workshop series will focus on the topic of consent; consent to treatment and consent to the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information.

Each of these issues have pieces of legislation dedicated solely to them: the *Health Care Consent Act* and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*. Why? Because being able to control what happens to our bodies and our own health information is at the heart of what it means to be a person.

This is why there is no defined minimum age for consent to treatment or control of personal health information. Once someone becomes capable of making consent decisions on their own, the law recognizes that they have a right to do so and they must be allowed to exercise that right fully. The right of clients to know what will be done to them, and to make an informed decision whether to go ahead, cannot be understated.

I am personally very excited about these workshops. I think they will educate, interest and challenge our members in a new way. Did you know that the only time you can provide treatment without informed consent is in an emergency situation? Or that there is no such thing as "global" consent? Or that inconvenience does not provide license to proceed without consent? These are all areas that will be explored during the Fall 2016 workshops.

I encourage all members, new and not-so-new, to attend one of the sessions. While our workshops are always designed to provide guidance and information to our members, we also learn from them. We expect that these sessions will be no exception. The issue of consent is an area ripe for conversation and institutional change and we think dietitians are up to the task. Come out and see if you agree. The back page of this newsletter has details about workshops in your area.

The right of clients to know what will be done to them, and to make an informed decision, cannot be understated.

