Interdisciplinary Specialist Certification in Obesity and Weight Management
Frequently Asked Questions

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.

Will the new certification address both childhood and adult obesity and weight management?

The practice analysis includes tasks related to both childhood and adult obesity and weight management. The results of the analysis will determine the content outline for the new certification.

How many practice hours will be required for the new certification?

This, too, will be determined by the results of the practice analysis.

Will the current certificate programs in adult and childhood weight management be required for eligibility to take the new certification examination?

No; however, they may be considered as an optional component of the eligibility requirements.

Will there be a study guide for this examination?

It is likely that private entrepreneurs and the Weight Management Dietetics Practice Group may develop study resources. CDR will not be developing a study resource; however, CDR will prepare a candidate handbook including the content outline, a reference list, and sample questions.

How much will it cost to take the examination?

The cost of the examination has not yet been determined.

What are the eligibility requirements for this new certification?

The eligibility requirements will be determined based on the results of the practice analysis. They will be published on CDR’s website as soon as they are available.
Will NDTRs be eligible for this new certification?

No.

Will there be a “grandfather” provision for this new certification?

No, CDR’s external accreditor the national Commission for Certifying Agencies does not allow grandfathering.

Will CDR continue to offer the Certificate of Training in Weight Management programs?

Yes, CDR plans to continue to offer the certificate programs.

Why were physicians not included in this practice analysis?

The American Board of Obesity Medicine (ABOM) currently administers an obesity and weight management certification for physicians.

Will other professions, such as pharmacists, be included in future practice analyses?

Yes, it is likely other professions may be included in the future.

What is the benefit of this new certification to practitioners?

This specialist certification will provide an opportunity for practitioners to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in this practice area.

Will there be recertification requirements?

Yes, like other CDR specialist certifications, it is likely recertification will be by examination.

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.