



LOUISIANA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN DIETETICS AND NUTRITION

LBEDN Mission Statement:

Our mission is to assure the consumer of qualified licensed professionals. In pursuing our goal, we provide a process by which consumers may file complaints against our licensees or persons practicing dietetics/nutrition without a license.

LBEDN NEWS

April 2026

Licensing Updates

LBEDN currently regulates **1945** licenses. During the first three quarters of this fiscal year, from **July 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026**, the Board received **237** applications, and has reviewed and approved a total of **187** applications as follows:

- New LDN Approvals: 135**
- New Provisional LDN Approvals: 15**
- Reinstated License Approvals: 26**
- Upgraded License Approvals: 11**

Compact Update

In June of 2025, Governor Landry vetoed House Bill 399 which would have allowed Louisiana to join the Dietitian Licensure Compact. You may see Governor Landry's message here: [Governor Landry's Dietetic Compact Veto](#).

Upcoming Events

- Renewals Open - April 15, 2026**
- Board Meeting - April 24, 2026**
- Board Meeting - August 14, 2026**
- Board Meeting - November 20, 2026**

All Board Meetings are open to the public.

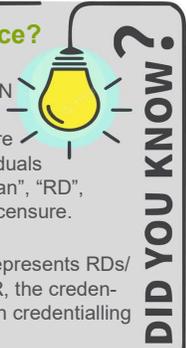
BOARD OPERATIONS

	07/01/2021 through 06/30/2022	07/01/2022 through 06/30/2023	07/01/2023 through 06/30/2024	07/01/2024 through 06/30/2025
New LDNs	108	178	187	175
New Provisional LDNS	38	20	32	26
Reinstated Licenses	19	20	29	30
Upgraded Licenses	35	19	19	22
FISCAL YEAR TOTAL	200	237	267	253
Total Number of Licensees at end of the Fiscal Year	1549	1582	1744	1873

Licensure vs. Registration: What's the Difference?

Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists (LDNs) are licensed by the LBEDN in Louisiana. Licensure is mandatory in Louisiana to fulfill the Board's purpose to protect the consumers of Louisiana. Licensure laws vary by state. Because Louisiana has title protection, individuals registered by CDR may not call themselves a "Registered Dietitian", "RD", "Registered Dietitian Nutritionist" or "RDN" without first holding licensure.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) credentials and represents RDs/RDNs. Registered Dietitian/Nutritionists are credentialed by CDR, the credentialing agency of AND. Membership in AND is voluntary, although credentialing is important for reimbursement in many employment settings.



Meet the Board

Monica Pierson-McDaniels, MS, RDN, LDN
Board Chairperson

Jennifer Duhon, MS, RD, LDN
Board Vice Chairperson

Marie Simpson, BSN, RN, CDCES
Secretary/Treasurer, Nurses Association

Martina Musmeci Salles, MPH, RDN, LDN, FAND
Board Member

Katie Vedros, MS, RD, LDN
Board Liaison

Terry Charles, MS, RD, LDN
Board Member

Vacant
Medical Advisor

Jamie Cochran, ATC, ACSM-CEP
Consumer Member

Greetings from the Board Chair

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of our licensing board newsletter. Our mission to protect the public and ensure compliance continues to guide the work of this board. I am grateful for the dedication of our licensees; and staff who help ensure that the consumers of Louisiana receive the highest level of care, integrity, and competence.

In this issue, you will find updates on board activities, regulatory developments, and resources designed to assist you in your professional obligations. We remain committed to transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement as we respond to the evolving needs of the communities served by Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists.

Thank you for your continued commitment to maintaining the standards that define our profession. I encourage you to stay engaged, and take advantage of the information highlighted in this newsletter.

Nutritionally yours,

Monica

Clinical Conversation

Diverse Career Settings for Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists

by: Terry Charles, MS, RD,LDN

Q: Are there many work settings available for Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists (LDNs)?

A: LDNs can work in a wide variety of settings that require specialized nutrition expertise. Their roles extend far beyond traditional hospital environments and include clinical, community, education, corporate, food industry, and food service areas.

Q: What do clinical LDNs do in hospitals and healthcare systems?

A: In hospitals and healthcare systems, LDNs provide nutritional assessments, nutrition counseling, and medical nutrition therapy, etc. Within a healthcare facility licensed by the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), LDNs are crucial because they can order enteral and parenteral nutrition. If privileged by the LDH licensed healthcare facility, LDNs can even order appropriate labs to ensure the effectiveness of the dietary plan. LDNs often specialize in areas such as oncology, renal care, pediatrics, and diabetes education. Many also provide telehealth services to improve access to nutrition care with appropriate state licensure.

Q: How do LDNs contribute to community and public health?

A: In community and public health settings, LDNs support disease prevention initiatives and serve programs such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Head Start. They may also work in K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, developing nutrition education programs and assisting with school meal planning.

Q: What opportunities are there for LDNs in higher education?

A: LDNs may teach nutrition and dietetic courses in higher education institutions. They can also direct graduate programs, internships, and supervised practice programs to train future dietitian and nutrition professionals.

Q: What roles do LDNs have in corporate and sports settings?

A: LDNs may work in corporate wellness programs, sports organizations, and health and fitness settings. In these roles, they promote employee health, optimize athletic performance, and develop wellness strategies. They may also work in correctional facilities managing menu planning and specialized dietary needs.

Q: Are there roles for LDNs in the food and nutrition industry, and food service management?

A: Yes. Dietitians contribute to product development, research, quality assurance, regulatory compliance, and marketing within food and nutrition science organizations. Opportunities also exist in pharmaceutical companies and private consulting practices. In food service management, LDNs oversee food purchasing and preparation, budgeting, staff training, and ensure compliance with safety and nutrition standards.

Q: Are these the only career paths available to LDNs?

A: No. These examples represent only a portion of available career opportunities. The field continues to expand into emerging areas such as integrative health, sustainability, media communications, and private practice consulting.

Q: Can the Louisiana Board of Examiners in Dietetics and Nutrition (LBEDN) create more opportunities for LDNs?

A: LBEDN cannot advocate for LDNs, but acts in the best interest of the public to protect the consumer. Associations act in the interest of the professional by advocating and legislating for the advancement of the professional and the profession. Associations increase public awareness of professional services.



A special thank you to the LBEDN Board members who completed presentations this fiscal year!

Each year, several programs and organizations request Board presentations. During these sessions, Board members discuss a variety of topics, including the Board's mission, its purpose, the Louisiana Dietetics/Nutrition Practice Act, the licensure process, the differences between licensure and registration, the complaint process, and examples of previous actions. Board members volunteer their time to support and give back to fellow professionals.

Recent presentations include:

- **Monica Pierson-McDaniels presented to Fran U graduate interns on October 17, 2025**
- **Martina Musmeci Salles presented to Tulane graduate interns on January 16, 2026**
- **Jennifer Duhon presented to Louisiana Tech graduate interns on February 13, 2026**
- **Jennifer Duhon presented to Nicholls graduate interns on March 26, 2026**

Upcoming presentations include:

- **Jennifer Duhon is scheduled to present at LSU on April 23, 2026**

If you are interested in scheduling a Board presentation information for your group, please submit your request via email to Tracy at tjeanmarie@lbedn.org. Requests should be made at least three months in advance when possible.

The Value of a Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist in Healthcare and Beyond

by: Tracy Lawrence Jeanmarie

The Louisiana Board of Examiners in Dietetics and Nutrition (LBEDN) recognizes concerns from licensees that Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists (LDNs) may not be valued or compensated adequately for their role in healthcare.

A Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist's ability to provide essential, evidence-based nutritional care and support across healthcare settings is an example of their true value. Their advanced training enables them to assess nutritional status, identify and diagnose nutrition-related problems, and implement individualized interventions tailored to specific medical conditions.

LDNs are uniquely qualified to assess the nutritional needs of individuals and groups based on appropriate biochemical, anthropometric, physical, and dietary data to determine nutrient needs and recommend to the primary health care provider appropriate nutritional intake including enteral and parenteral nutrition. With privileges and facility authorization granted within a healthcare facility licensed by the Louisiana Department of Health, the LDN's ability to independently write and manage nutrition-related healthcare orders, such as nutrition support protocols and therapeutic diet orders, enhances the quality and efficiency of patient care. This level of clinical autonomy improves the accuracy and timeliness of nutrition interventions, which may minimize complications and medical errors; ultimately reducing harm to the consumer. In addition to operational efficiencies for healthcare facilities, improved execution of nutrition care correlates with better patient outcomes including lower mortality rate and shorter hospital stays.^{1,2}

While the importance of dietetics and nutrition continues to expand within healthcare, LBEDN cannot advocate for the advancement of the profession or the professional. The purpose and mission of the Board is to assure the consumer of qualified licensed professionals. In pursuing our goal, we provide a process by which consumers may file complaints against our licensees or persons practicing dietetics/nutrition without a license.

We encourage LDNs to engage with local and national professional organizations and associations. These entities play a vital role in promoting the profession, advocating for fair compensation, expanding professional opportunities, and educating the public about the value of licensed dietetic/nutrition experts.

Together, through regulatory oversight and professional advocacy, LBEDN can ensure that the public receives safe, competent, and ethical care while associations continue to support Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists in gaining the recognition and compensation they deserve.

¹ Phillips W, Doley J. Granting order-writing privileges to registered dietitian nutritionists can decrease costs in acute care hospitals. 2017;117(6):840-847.

² Hassell JT, Games AD, Shaffer B, Harkins LE. Nutrition support team management of enterally fed patients in a community hospital is cost-beneficial. 1994;94

Welcome New Board Members



Katie Vedros, MS, RD, LDN

Katie Vedros is a Licensed and Registered Dietitian with five years of experience in clinical nutrition and dietetic education. She earned her Bachelor's degree, completed her Dietetic Internship, and obtained her Master's degree from Nicholls State University, where she developed a strong foundation in nutrition science and a passion for mentoring future dietitians.

Katie began her career at Woman's Hospital, where she gained extensive experience providing nutrition care to women across all stages of life. Seeking to broaden her clinical expertise, she transitioned to Ochsner Baton Rouge, working with a diverse patient population and expanding her skills in medical nutrition therapy.

Today, Katie has achieved her dream role as a Dietetic Internship Instructor at Nicholls State University, where she guides and inspires the next generation of dietitians to excel in the field.

Terry Charles, MS, RD, LDN

Terry C. Charles is a Licensed and Registered Dietitian who serves as the Child Nutrition Supervisor in St. John the Baptist Parish Schools and is licensed through the Louisiana Department of Education's Child Nutrition Services. With more than 30 years of professional experience in food service management, nutrition education, elderly feeding programs, and consulting dietitian services. Terry is recognized as a results-driven leader and visionary in the field of child nutrition.

Her career reflects a consistent record of improving program operations, implementing fiscal and strategic initiatives, and promoting wellness through sound nutrition practices. Terry currently manages a \$4 million United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch and Breakfast Program for St. John the Baptist Parish Schools, ensuring compliance, efficiency, and the delivery of nutritious meals to students across the district.

Terry has held leadership positions within the School Nutrition Association of Louisiana, including serving as President. Her extensive professional experience includes roles with St. Charles Hospital, Hope Haven Madonna Manor Boys Home, St. John the Baptist Parish Schools, the American Heart Association, Aldine Independent School District, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and the Southeast Dairy Association.

Terry earned her Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a Master of Science in Nutritional Science from Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama.



Jamie Cochran, ATC, ACSM-CEP

Jamie Cochran is a preventative healthcare professional with 27 years of experience spanning cardiac rehabilitation, sports medicine, and clinical exercise physiology. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science with a minor in Sports Medicine from Northwestern State University and maintains multiple advanced certifications, including NATA Certified Athletic Trainer, NASM Advanced Corrective Exercise Specialist, and ACSM Clinical Exercise Physiologist.

Throughout her career, Jamie has combined clinical expertise with patient-centered care, helping individuals improve their health, mobility, and quality of life. She has served in diverse healthcare settings, from cardiac rehabilitation programs to collegiate and secondary athletic training environments and is known for developing individualized exercise and recovery strategies tailored to each patient's needs.

Prior to returning to Louisiana, she held leadership roles at the world-renowned Cooper Fitness Center in Dallas, Texas, where she served as Professional Fitness Trainer and Parkinson's Program Director. Her dedication and excellence were recognized in 2015 when she was named Cooper Fitness Center Trainer of the Year, a testament to her ability to inspire and guide clients across all stages of health and wellness.

Today, Jamie continues to advance best practices in exercise science and clinical care, drawing on decades of experience to bridge the gap between preventive health, rehabilitation, and long-term wellness. She is passionate about fostering patient engagement, supporting collaborative healthcare models, and contributing her expertise to initiatives that elevate the health of communities across Louisiana.

Staying Connected to the Profession:

Why Maintaining your Dietitian/Nutritionist Licensure and Credentials Matters after Retirement

By: Monica Pierson-McDaniels, MS, RDN, LDN

Across the country, many licensed, registered dietitians are reaching well-earned retirement milestones. After years—often decades—of serving patients, communities, institutions, and students, the idea of stepping away from daily practice can be both exciting and bitter-sweet. For some, retirement also raises an important question: *Should I allow my licensure and credentials to lapse?*

Before making that decision, it's worth considering the many benefits of maintaining your professional licensure and credentials, and the meaningful ways you can continue contributing to the field of dietetics—even after stepping back from full-time work.

Your Experience Is Invaluable

The profession of dietetics/nutrition depends on experienced practitioners who bring wisdom, perspective, and institutional knowledge that cannot be replaced quickly. Early-career dietitians frequently seek guidance from seasoned professionals who have navigated clinical challenges, policy changes, emerging research, and evolving patient needs.

By maintaining your licensure and credentials, you remain part of the professional community and preserve the ability to share your expertise when and where it's needed.

Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists and RD/RDNs Remain in High Demand

Healthcare systems, long-term care facilities, community organizations, and educational programs continue to experience workforce shortages in many areas. Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists who wish to reduce their workload—rather than fully retire—can often find flexible opportunities that benefit both themselves and the profession.

Maintaining your licensure and registration keeps the door open to these opportunities without the barriers that may arise if you later decide to return after letting it lapse.

Flexible Ways to Stay Involved

Retirement does not have to mean leaving the profession entirely. Many licensed dietitian/nutritionists choose to stay engaged in ways that are more flexible, less time-intensive, and deeply rewarding.

Some possibilities include:

- **Consulting and Contract Work**
Facilities such as long-term care centers, dialysis units, and community programs often need part-time or short-term consulting dietitians. Consulting can allow you to work a limited number of hours while maintaining professional engagement.
- **Mentorship and Preceptorship**
Students and dietetic interns benefit enormously from experienced practitioners. Serving as a preceptor, mentor, or guest lecturer allows you to shape the next generation of dietitians while sharing the knowledge you've built over your career.
- **Volunteer and Community Roles**
Public health initiatives, nonprofit organizations, food banks, and community wellness programs frequently seek qualified nutrition professionals. These roles allow you to make a meaningful impact without the demands of full-time employment.
- **Professional Service**
Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists can serve on advisory boards, licensing boards, committees, and professional associations. These roles help guide the future of dietetics and nutrition, and ensure that experienced voices remain part of the conversation.
- **Telehealth and Virtual Counseling**
Advances in technology have made remote nutrition counseling increasingly common. Telehealth offers the flexibility to see clients from home and set your own schedule.

Protecting Your Professional Identity

For many practitioners, being a Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist is more than a job—it is a lifelong professional identity. Maintaining your licensure and credentials allows you to remain connected to the standards, ethics, and community that shaped your career.

It also ensures that, should you decide to take on occasional work or volunteer roles requiring licensure or registration, you are ready to do so without reinstatement and recredentialing hurdles.

A Profession That Still Needs You

The field of nutrition and dietetics continues to evolve rapidly. From chronic disease management to food insecurity, public health nutrition, and aging populations, the expertise of experienced dietitians remains critical.

Even in retirement, your voice, knowledge, and mentorship can strengthen the profession and support those just beginning their careers.

Consider Staying Licensed and Credentialed

If you are approaching retirement, consider maintaining both your state licensure and national credential. Doing so preserves your professional legacy while giving you the freedom to stay involved in ways that fit your lifestyle.

Retirement can mark the beginning of a new chapter—one where your experience continues to guide, inspire, and shape the future of dietetics.

Your profession still values your knowledge, and your community still benefits from your expertise.

BOARD PRESENTATIONS:

Is your group interested in having a Board member present information regarding licensure law, board activities or related topics? The Board is interested in addressing your needs. We especially welcome the opportunity to speak with student groups, interns, and district associations. We want to meet with you to share about our law and rules, and to answer your questions. To request a presentation, please email Tracy at tjeanmarie@lbedn.org. We ask that you make your request three months in advance if possible.

Food, Culture, and Patient Care:

Why Louisiana's Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists Matter More Than Ever

By: Marie Simpson, BSN, RN, CDCES

A Message of Gratitude to Louisiana's Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists (LDNs)

As a registered nurse, I have the privilege of seeing the profound impact Louisiana's LDNs make across our state, communities, families, and in people's lives. Every day, you bring expertise, compassion, and professionalism to the individuals and communities you serve. Your work strengthens Louisiana's healthcare system in ways that deserve recognition and sincere appreciation.

Your Expertise Elevates Patient Care

Nutrition is a cornerstone of health, and your ability to translate complex science into practical, culturally sensitive guidance is invaluable. In a state where food is deeply tied to identity and tradition, you help patients make meaningful changes without losing the connection to the culture, flavors, and heritage they love. That balance requires skill, empathy, and deep understanding — qualities you demonstrate consistently. Seriously, can you imagine someone who does not understand our state's cultures and traditions attempt to coach a patient about Louisiana delicacies such as grillades, chitterlings, turkey necks, boudin, or cracklings? Actually, that could be quite entertaining.

Your Integration Is Essential — and Too Often Underutilized

Nutrition is one of the most powerful tools we have in preventing and managing disease. LDNs faithfully preached the truth that *food is medicine* long before it was popular. Despite the clear evidence supporting medical nutrition therapy, dietitian services remain underutilized in many settings. Too often, patients who would benefit from your expertise are referred late — or not at all. When patients are referred for dietetic and nutrition services, reimbursement is sometimes inadequate.

This underutilization does not reflect a lack of value. On the contrary, it underscores how much more we can accomplish when LDNs are fully integrated into care teams. Your training, your clinical insight, and your ability to translate nutrition science into practical, culturally sensitive guidance are indispensable. Louisiana's health outcomes improve when your expertise is brought to the forefront.

Leaders in Prevention and Community Health

Beyond clinical settings, your influence extends into schools, public health programs, long term care, and community initiatives. You advocate for better nutrition access, address chronic disease, and empower individuals to take control of their wellbeing. Your work touches every corner of Louisiana, often in ways that go unseen but never unfelt.

With Deep Appreciation

To every Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist, and to those following in their footsteps as Provisionally Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists in Louisiana: thank you.

Thank you for your dedication to evidence based practice. Thank you for your commitment to patient-centered care. Thank you for collaborating so seamlessly with the broader healthcare team. And thank you for upholding the standards and integrity of the profession with such pride.

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