

**June 22, 2023 Testimony of the American Nutrition Association
Before the Michigan House Health Policy Committee**

The American Nutrition Association, on behalf of Certified Nutrition Specialists and our Board for Certification of Nutrition Specialists who live and/or practice in Michigan, opposes House Bill 4608 as currently written, granting exclusive scope licensure to only registered dietitian nutritionists. This bill as written is:

- it is remarkably similar to an earlier law that was repealed by the MI legislature in 2014 because it was not equitable in process, substance, or impact;
- it would only license holders of a single, private trade association credential, to practice medical nutrition therapy in MI, to the exclusion of other competent, well-qualified medical nutrition therapy practitioners;
- it would deny consumers the choice of from whom to seek nutrition guidance; and
- it fails to protect current nutrition practitioners who have spent significant resources and years training, and building small businesses in Michigan.

The protected scope defined, on page 6(l), states that the “practice of medical nutrition therapy” means the provision of nutrition care services for the treatment or management of diseases or medical conditions. **Certified Nutrition Specialists (CNSs) are specifically trained in and practice medical nutrition therapy. RDNs and CNSs both practice medical nutrition therapy.** The CNS scope of practice includes ordering and assessing qualitative and quantitative aspects of health status such as [...] biochemical and laboratory assessment data [...] anthropometrics, dietary assessment [...] nutrition physical examination [...]” and developing nutrition programs based on this info. Additional information regarding the CNS scope of practice can be found at <https://theana.org/node/746>.

We have heard statements that suggest that CNSs would be covered by the exemptions written within the bill (p. 7-8) and would thus be able to continue in practice although unlicensed. However, the exemptions listed on p. 7-8 have been known by both the Academy and ANA for many years as “the coaching exemption” written to ensure those who do health and wellness coaching, but *not* MNT, would be protected. This is an understanding based on 7 years of working on bills collaboratively with the national Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, and most recently with the Michigan Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics in 2021 and 2022. It appears inconsistent that now these could exempt the very activities that are being captured in the exclusive scope. We feel obligated to state that this bill would eliminate the ability of Certified Nutrition Specialists to continue to practice medical nutrition therapy in MI, despite having earned advanced degrees in nutrition from regionally accredited colleges or universities, completing of 1,000 supervised practice hours, and passing a nationally accredited master’s level exam.

ANA believes consumers, in Michigan are best served by access to, and choice of, a broad range of providers regulated by laws that take into account differing types and levels of training, and the offering

of services appropriate to that training. The bill was introduced without consultation with ANA and currently serves the interests of a single group of a private trade association's credential holders. Michigan citizens deserve access to *all* highly qualified nutrition professionals, and this bill, as currently written, falls short of promoting this goal.

Thank you for your time, attention, and thoughtful consideration of our comments. We urge this bill be held in committee while we continue to pursue an equitable solution with bill sponsors.

Respectfully submitted,

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