

## **CONTEXT**

Most doctors understand the importance of nutrition and the value of a dietitian's consult – but don't know where or how to refer patients. That is because currently in BC, there are limited referral options. Dietitians are not always covered by employee health insurance plans (and DC is also working to change that!) and our most vulnerable populations do not have private health insurance plans. Some patients' needs can be addressed through HealthLink BC dietitians, but others need a primary care team based care that includes dietitians.

## **KEY MESSAGES FOR PHYSICIANS**

1. We are asking for doctors' support to include dietitians as part of team based primary health care in BC. This government has committed to making the provision of team based primary care, including dietitians, the top priority for the Ministry of Health. We understand that while this commitment is key, there are many competing demands and we need physicians support to make this happen. Dietitians of Canada will present these letters to the BC Minister of Health.
2. Having a dietitian on the healthcare team can improve patient care.  
By understanding the science of nutrients and food and translating it into actionable nutrition counsel, dietitians create better health outcomes often reducing the amount of medication patients need. For example, medical nutrition therapy from a dietitian has been shown to lower A1c 1 to 2%, Blood Pressure 6 to 8 mmHg, cholesterol 20 to 30%.
3. Having a dietitian on the healthcare team can reduce doctors workload and save time. About 20 to 25% of family doctor visits are for nutrition related conditions.