

Madam Chair and Commission members, I am Adrien Paczosa, President of **iLiveWell Nutrition Therapy** here in Austin. I am a Licensed Dietitian and I hire Licensed Dietitians to work for me.

I am strongly opposed to the proposal in the DSHS Sunset Staff Report to discontinue dietitian regulation and licensure. As a business owner I appreciate the services that the Texas State Board of Examiners provides to me. At any time of the day or night I can go on-line and verify licensure of a potential employee. This saves time and many more steps that cannot be duplicated outside of state licensure. Additionally, the Board oversees and administers the Jurisprudence Exam, which Licensed Dietitians must take every 2 years. This exam reviews the Texas dietetic licensure statutes and rules that require professional and ethical standards in all client interactions. I believe this requirement is particularly vital in my practice, which focuses on mental health and addiction. In my area of practice in mental health and addiction, I can't stress how vital my ethical behaviors are for the safety of my client's outcomes. I believe this requirement keeps my employees and me always mindful of how we serve our clients and keeps the welfare of the Texas public in focus.

Licensed Dietitians provide services that are irreplaceable and important to the health and safety of Texans. The specialized training I received as a Licensed Dietitian allows me to offer Medical Nutrition Therapy that can assess clients' diagnoses, review their dietary intake, identify areas where change is needed, and provide nutrition counseling to design a program that will not only improve their health but also reduce long-term medical costs.

My area of expertise is eating disorders and addictions. I recently had a client come to my office who had a long-standing Eating Disorder (ED) along with a family history of an auto immune disease. This bright, driven college student almost had to leave school due to a near-fatal Eating Disorder relapse sparked by "nutrition professionals" at her gym. The workout facility was offering a 30-day challenge that included nutrition and physical activity. There was no screening process, no mental health questions, no Licensed Dietitian supervising or providing input to this competition. The rules of the game were set up without regard to established guidelines for safe weight loss. My client relapsed back in to her Eating Disorder. Luckily her family caught the warning signs because they were educated during prior counseling sessions with a licensed dietitian and brought her in. Her lab work showed extreme cardiac muscle damage, starvation to the point where her body was eating her liver to stay alive, and her hormones had shut down. The medical risk that this young woman was placed in was unsafe, which leads me to wonder how many other times has a Texan's health been put at such devastating risk?

I ask that you continue the licensure of Dietitians for the health and welfare of all Texans.