
OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST

CDR/ADA adopts policy on appropriate Use of “RD” and DTR” credentials

Protecting our property is a major concern for all of us. Whether that property is our home, jewelry, cars, or cash we all strive to hold on to these tangible assets. We also place value on intangible assets that are just as valuable, such as friendship and reputation.

Corporations are equally concerned about protecting their assets, ranging from product inventory to market-place identity. The American Dietetic Association is no different from any other corporation in this regard. ADA owns various types of assets. Among its most valuable properties are the credentials controlled by the Commission on Dietetic Registration – namely, Registered Dietitian, RD, and Dietetic Technician Registered, DTR.

CDR awards these credentials only to individuals who have met specific educational and experiential requirements and have passed an examination. These practitioners may use the credential, provided they continue to meet CDR requirements, including the attainment of appropriate continuing professional education hours and payment of the registration maintenance fee.

The credential must be used in a professional, dignified manner to indicate registration with CDR. The most common usage is after the practitioner’s name as a professional designation, e.g., Jane Doe, RD, or John Smith, DTR.

Over the years, ADA has tried to publicly position the credentialed practitioner by promoting these designations. Individual practitioners have also been creative in developing promotional materials. In some isolated cases, this creativity has raised concerns.

Recently, CDR learned that some RDs have been using the RD credential for commercial purposes to promote products and services. There are examples of practitioners using the RD credential as part of a product name or in their company name. There are even examples of RDs attempting to trademark the credential in their company’s name. CDR and the ADA Board of Directors are concerned about this development.

ADA has the exclusive legal right to control the credentials on the basis of long-standing usage and public identification of the credentials with CDR/ADA. To maintain these rights, ADA must monitor the credentials adequately to prohibit unauthorized and inappropriate uses. Otherwise,

CDR/ADA could risk losing its exclusive right to control the credentials; and confusing could result in the profession and marketplace.

CDR and the ADA Board of Directors took action to deal with this problem by adopting, the following policy.

Individuals should use the “Registered Dietitian,” “RD,” and “Dietitian Technician, Registered,” “DTR,” credentials after their names to indicate registration by CDR. While RDs and DTRs are encouraged to promote the meaning of the credentials, they may not appropriate them for their own use to promote products or services. Individuals may only use credentials owned by CDR/ADA for commercial purposes if authorized in writing by CDR/ADA. Authorization will not be granted to use the credentials on products. Authorization will be granted for use in a company name if the name is descriptive of the services provided by the company and is not misleading. For example, if the company name contains the RD credential, all persons giving professional advice must be RDs. The name cannot suggest the provision of services in a technical or geographical area if such services are not regularly available. Authorization will not be granted for any use that might denigrate the credential or suggest endorsement by CDR/ADA.

If you would like authorization to use the credential in a manner permitted by this policy, please write to:

Chris Reidy
Director of Credentialing
Commission on Dietetic Registration
American Dietetic Association
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60606

CDR/ADA is in the process of evaluating current usage of the credentials for products and services. On the following page, there is an advertisement informing *Journal* readers that a company formerly known as “AVs by RDs” has changed its name to comply with the policy. CDR and ADA appreciate the cooperation of the company’s principal, Eve Lowery, who is a registered dietitian.