

## *Dietetic Internship in Public Health*

### *Eat Healthy – Be Active – Live Well*

Tri-County Health Department offers a dietetic internship accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (A.N.D.). ACEND is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. ACEND can be reached at 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, by telephone at 800-877-1600 ext. 5400, or email at [acend@eatright.org](mailto:acend@eatright.org).

Our program runs from early/mid-August to late June/early July each year. We accept up to six full-time interns annually who complete the experience in 10½ months and are then eligible to sit for the A.N.D. Commission on Dietetic Registration Examination for Dietitians to earn RD status.

The mission of Tri-County Health Department is to protect, promote and improve the health, environment, and quality of life of the citizens of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties. The Nutrition Division's mission is to partner with the Tri-County community to promote wellness across the lifespan through nutrition policies and programs such as:

- Dietetic internship
- Colorado's largest WIC program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)
- Community nutrition education programs
- Newsletters and educational materials
- Cooperative projects with other agencies
- School and childcare collaborations
- Tri-County Employee Wellness Program
- Peak Wellness (cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes prevention program for 40-64-year-old women)
- Community garden projects



Tri-County Health Department Registered Dietitian, Alice Kremer, explains the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables at a health fair.

## *Tri-County Health Department*

Tri-County Health Department, founded in 1948, currently serves over 1.3 million residents in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties, three of seven counties that make up the Metro Denver area. Tri-County Health has eleven offices staffed by registered dietitians, nurses, health educators, environmentalists and other health professionals as well as satellite offices offering WIC services only. TCHD is a national leader in public health and has received many awards for innovative services.



Tri-County Health Department Administrative Office

## *Our Colorado Connection*



Andrea, Alicia, and Kristin, class of 2006, delight in a day of snowboarding.

Colorado's Rocky Mountains provide a majestic backdrop for the Metro Denver area. Only a short drive from the city, the Rockies offer many recreational opportunities such as skiing, camping, hiking, climbing, biking and fishing. Historic mountain towns, mineral spring spas and quaint hotels add flavor to a something-for-everyone atmosphere.

Denver is a young, diverse city and is one of the fittest in the country, partly due to having the nation's largest public parks system. Educational and cultural activities abound with nine major colleges and universities, museums, a symphony orchestra and numerous theater companies. Major sports teams and world-class restaurants also add to Metro Denver's appeal.

Denverites enjoy year-round comfortable living, with sunny skies, moderate temperatures and low humidity.

Experience the advantages of the Mile High City while advancing your career through Tri-County Health Department's challenging Dietetic Internship in Public Health.

## Benefits

Tri-County's internship provides you with many benefits.

Professional/Career benefits:

- Preparation for the CDR Registration Examination for Dietitians
- Networking opportunities with dietetics professionals
- In-depth projects and experience to add to your resume and build your skills
- Professional Development Portfolio and resume assistance

Preparation for a variety of entry level dietetic or food service positions. Recent graduates are employed in the following positions:

- Public health as WIC dietitians
- Hospital clinical dietitians
- School food service dietitians
- Cooperative extension
- International Aid organizations
- United States Armed Forces
- Food industry
- Private practice
- Long term care
- Outpatient care

Program benefits:

- Varied practice experience in public health and community nutrition
- Solid foundation in counseling skills and medical nutrition therapy
- Qualified professional instructors
- Health Department holidays, plus one week's vacation leave



Kim is sworn in to the Navy at graduation ceremonies, July 1994.

## Expenses

**Tuition:** \$6000 for the 2012–2013 year. This fee covers administration of the program, most learning materials, professional meetings and seminars.

**Application Fee:** \$60. If you are selected for the internship, this fee will be applied toward your tuition.

**Professional Liability Insurance:** Approximately \$30 per year and must be provided by the intern. The application information will be sent to the intern before the program begins.

**Health Insurance:** This is required and is the intern's responsibility. Proof of health insurance must be provided by the intern.

**Housing:** (unfurnished) \$700-\$1000 per month in the Denver metro area. Some interns have shared housing. Interns will be provided with addresses and phone numbers of their classmates.

**Food:** There are no food service facilities at Tri-County Health offices. Some supervised practice experiences, such as hospitals and clinics, provide free or reduced-cost meals.

**Transportation:** \$120 per month for gasoline. All auto insurance must be provided by the intern. Bus and light rail services are available in Denver, but a reliable vehicle is required. The intern is responsible for any affiliation parking expense.

**Books/Materials:** Approximately \$150-\$200. Interns will be sent a list of required materials.

## *Program Synopsis*

**The mission of Tri-County's Dietetic Internship is to provide students with a community/public health dietetic practice experience, qualifying them to take the CDR examination for dietetic registration and to produce competent entry-level practitioners in community/public health nutrition.**

You can complete the dietetic internship in 10½ months (46 weeks).

The internship requires 40 hours per week on site. Evening and weekend time may be needed to complete assignments, readings and projects. Interns will work some weekends, evenings and holidays. While at affiliating hospitals, interns will work hours required by the hospital preceptor.

### *Summary of Supervised Practice*

Rotation	Length
Orientation	1 week
Tri-County Health WIC	9 weeks
Medical Nutrition Therapy	8 weeks
Clinical Pediatrics	1 week
Community Dietetics	9 weeks
Food Service	5 weeks
Management	4 weeks
Peak Wellness Program	1 week
Projects and Research	5 weeks
Long Term Care	1 week
Intern choice	1 week
Vacation leave	<u>1 week</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 weeks</b>

## Community Dietetics

Community education is an essential component of public health nutrition at Tri-County Health. During your community dietetics experience you will perform these activities to improve your skills in teaching, writing and counseling:

- Complete a community research project for Tri-County Health Department
- Develop teaching aids and teach classes in Tri-County's clinics and community settings
- Plan and participate in community health fairs
- Conduct program evaluation
- Author nutrition newsletter articles
- Write a press release or website fact sheet
- Answer nutrition questions from the community
- Practice food demonstrations and recipe modification/testing
- Learn marketing skills and complete a marketing plan
- Learn traditional and non-traditional areas of dietetics practice
- Participate in the grant writing process



Ellie, class of 2008, demonstrates Thai cooking to staff at a WIC workshop.

## Food Service

Tri-County Health Department collaborates with several food service facilities in the Metro Denver area. You will gain practical hands-on food service experience as well as learn food service management principles through these activities:

- Observe and participate in the ordering, receiving, storage and handling of food, supplies and equipment
- Compare quantity food production in diverse settings
- Review procedures for menu planning, the use of standardized recipes, and the control of a food service budget
- Create and analyze menus using nutrition software
- Critique the design and layout of a food service kitchen
- Conduct food service employee training
- Accompany a Tri-County Health sanitarian on food service health inspections.
- Complete special food service projects to include all aspects of food service management



Ellie, class of 2008, working in a hospital kitchen.

## *Medical Nutrition Therapy*

Medical nutrition therapy is an integral part of public health nutrition. Outpatient experience is provided through high risk WIC and Peak Wellness counseling, and Tri-County Health contracts with several area hospitals to provide inpatient experience. During your supervised practice you will have these opportunities:

- Apply your knowledge of nutrition requirements for normal adults, infants, children, and pregnant and lactating women
- Interpret medical terminology and chart notes using the Nutrition Care Process in hospital and community settings
- Attend counseling and diet assessment in-services, and observe counseling sessions by Tri-County Health's dietitians before trying out your skills
- Participate in team meetings with clinic nurses and practitioners
- Counsel a diverse population of high risk clients from Tri-County Health clinics, hospitals and the community
- Work with hospital clinical dietitians, attend patient rounds and participate in medical nutrition therapy for a variety of disease states/conditions
- Complete clinical case studies and present to staff dietitians
- Work at a local long term care facility and pediatric hospital
- Provide RD staff relief as appropriate to the facility and Tri-County WIC clinics



Lisa, class of 1992,  
counsels a client in a WIC clinic.



Michelle, class of 2007,  
shows Ellie, class of 2008,  
charting procedures at one of our  
hospital affiliations.

## Management

Management experiences focus on management styles and practices within Tri-County Health Department and the Nutrition Division. Tri-County Health's management staff will help you accomplish these objectives:

- Learn management principles and specific procedures used by Tri-County Health and selected affiliates
- Observe and participate in employee interviewing and hiring
- Become acquainted with Tri-County Health's administrative personnel and with its various levels and styles of management
- Write or revise a job description and workplace policy
- Plan, conduct, and evaluate a day-long training session for WIC staff
- Complete a proposal for the development and layout of a new WIC clinic
- Meet with directors of other local WIC and supplemental food programs and with State officials who oversee these programs
- Complete a cost analysis project and write a mock WIC budget
- Participate in public policy as it relates to public health and the dietetics profession



Xuan-Dao, class of 1998,  
conducts a training session for staff.

## Projects/Research

Research concepts are key components in public health nutrition programs. Through classes, field sites, and hands-on projects you will perform these tasks:



Jenna, class of 2005, displays  
Physician Kits developed by her class.

- Work in a facility that conducts nutrition research
- Research a nutrition issue of current importance and summarize findings in a position paper
- Conduct a community research project, collect and evaluate data, develop a plan to satisfy project requirements, and present the results of the project
- Critique nutrition research articles and utilize the Academy's Evidence Analysis Library to promote evidence-based dietetics practice

## Evaluation

Evaluation is essential to your success as an intern and to the success of the program. Evaluation will consist of the following:

- Formal evaluation twice during the internship. At this time all checklists will be reviewed and progress discussed.
- Weekly evaluations during supervised clinical dietetics practice and at the end of this practice. A point system will be used to evaluate intern performance.
- Frequent, informal evaluations by Tri-County dietitians and at the end of each rotation within Tri-County Health Department.
- Self-assessment of learning and challenges.
- Feedback on presentations and written work.
- Monthly intern meetings to discuss rotations, share experiences and clarify assignments.
- An evaluation by the intern at the end of each rotation and a final evaluation at the end of the internship.



Heidi, Sean, Beth, and Desiree, class of 1995, enjoy graduation ceremonies with Anne Bennett, Director of Nutrition

Interns who successfully complete all rotations will be issued a verification statement at the end of the internship.

A graduation ceremony is held at the conclusion of the internship each year.

## Qualifications

- Completion of academic requirements of an ACEND-approved Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD).
- Baccalaureate or master's degree in nutrition or dietetics or a related field from an accredited college or university.
- A MINIMUM cumulative grade point average of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale. A MINIMUM nutrition (DPD) grade point average of 3.0.
- Internship placements are competitive. Dietetics-related and/or food service experience is very helpful, whether paid or volunteer work.
- Additional course work and/or qualified work experience is required in nutrition and/or food service to update degrees completed five years or more prior to application to the internship. Recommended courses include Medical Nutrition Therapy, Biochemistry, Statistics or Epidemiology, Medical Terminology. Must complete any refresher courses with B grade or better. All courses to satisfy recency of education requirements must have been completed within the last five years and before beginning the internship. Approval of course work/work experience will be at the discretion of the internship director.

## Program Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1:** To provide a dietetic practice experience with emphasis in community/public health, providing dietetics graduates with practical, up-to-date knowledge of nutrition along with varied dietetic experiences.

- Objectives:*
- Interns will complete rotations on-site at TCHD facilities for at least fifty percent of program length.
  - At least fifty percent of TCHD Internship graduates will obtain a professional dietetic or related position in public health/community nutrition within three years of graduation.

**Goal 2:** To graduate interns in community/public health who will successfully complete the CDR examination on the first attempt and become registered dietitians.

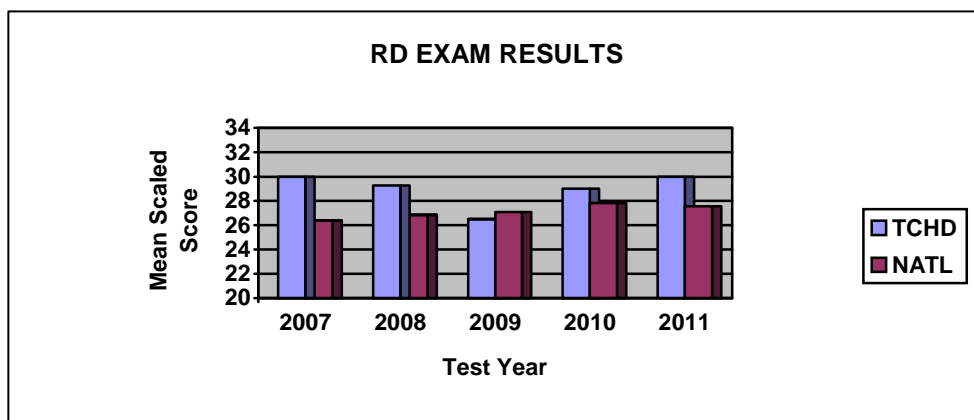
- Objectives:*
- At least eighty percent of TCHD Graduates will sit for the CDR examination within six months of graduation.
  - Upon completion of the Tri-County internship, at least 80 percent of graduates will pass the CDR examination on the first attempt. **(Our pass rate is 95%.)**

**Goal 3:** To provide quality affiliations in Food Service, Clinical and Long-Term Care.

- Objectives:*
- Interns will complete evaluations of affiliations at the end of their rotations, with ninety percent of interns rating affiliations at a level of 3 or higher on 5-point scales for professionalism, teaching effectiveness and adequate exposure to varied medical conditions.
  - Internship director will visit the facilities during intern rotations to evaluate intern's progress and affiliation's activities.

**Goal 4:** To maintain quality of the Tri-County Health Department Internship.

- Objectives:*
- Conduct regular internship advisory committee meetings to gain input from constituents representing at least four areas of dietetics practice.
  - At least ninety percent of graduates will rate overall program effectiveness and preparation for entry-level practice at a level of 3 or higher on 5-point scales.



## *Community/Public Health Emphasis Competencies*

**In addition to the Core Competencies required by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, which are common to all dietetic internships, Tri-County's program includes special emphasis and experience in these areas:**

1. Participate in development and evaluation of community-based food and nutrition programs
2. Conduct original community-based research, utilizing nutrition surveillance and monitoring systems as appropriate to inform research projects and provide framework for action
3. Participate in the grant writing process
4. Collaborate with food security organizations to promote access to healthy foods for target populations
5. Obtain extensive WIC training and full Certified WIC Authority status, including lactation management skills
6. Demonstrate client-centered counseling skills resulting in appropriate goal setting for behavior change
7. Apply key public health principles to nutrition practice (and interdisciplinary practice) at local health department
8. Engage in and teach food preparation, ranging from gardening and grocery shopping to cooking and recipe modification
9. Prepare interactive learning plans and facilitate group nutrition education sessions



Audrey, Jeannie, Renee and Lindsay, class of 2011, get ready to dig in the dirt at a WIC community garden.

## Application Procedures

**Applications must be submitted by February 1. Please note this deadline is earlier than many other programs.**

- Our program participates in the on-line centralized internship application, DICAS, which may be accessed at <https://portal.dicas.org> , e-mail [DICASinfo@DICAS.org](mailto:DICASinfo@DICAS.org). The on-line application must be completed for our program by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on **February 1** each year. The fee to use DICAS is \$40 for the first application submitted and \$20 for each additional application.
- When completing the application form, applicants must include the name and contact information (specifically an e-mail address) for each reference. This will trigger an e-mail message requesting completion of a reference form. The form will be completed on-line.
- Applicants who apply to internships using DICAS will be asked to complete a personal statement. Questions to be addressed in the personal statement include:
  - Why do you want to enter the dietetics profession?
  - Discuss experiences that have helped to prepare you for your career,
  - What are your short-term and long-term goals?
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses or areas needing improvement?
  - Anything else you consider important to the selection decision? (optional)
- Official **transcripts from all colleges and universities attended** should be sent to:  
DICAS- Transcript Dept  
PO Box 9118  
Watertown, MA 02472
- Applicants must also register online for computer matching at [www.dnndigital.com](http://www.dnndigital.com) and select dietetic internship priority choices by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on February 15. There is a \$50.00 computer matching fee. Instructions can be found at the D&D Digital website.
- In addition to the DICAS and D&D Digital fees, which applicants must submit separately to those organizations, Tri-County also requires a non-refundable \$60.00 application fee payable to Tri-County Health Department. Please mail your application fee check or money order (postmarked by February 1<sup>st</sup>) to:

Secretary, Nutrition Division  
Tri-County Health Department  
6162 S. Willow Drive, Suite 100  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111

For more information, contact Heidi Fritz, Dietetic Internship Director, [hfritz@tchd.org](mailto:hfritz@tchd.org)/  
720-200-1511, or Phyllis Holtan, Nutrition Division Secretary, [pholtan@tchd.org](mailto:pholtan@tchd.org)/720-200-1514.

## **FAQs about the Tri-County Health Department Dietetic Internship**

### **How can I make my application stand out?**

All components of your application are important, yet it is the total package we are looking for. First and foremost, you are encouraged to obtain as much dietetic- and/or food-service related experience (paid or unpaid) as you can on your own. This is much more attractive than solely a series of required practicum hours you did for your classes. You can also demonstrate initiative by showing your involvement in clubs and other school or civic organizations. Second, if you have any special skills or training, such as the ability to speak a second language or experience writing a grant or conducting research, please list this on your application.

### **Does my state of residency matter?**

No. We accept interns from all over! There are no quotas on how many interns come from Colorado each year. We consider each applicant individually, and we are sometimes matched with mostly Colorado folks and other times with most interns from out of state.

### **How many applications do you receive each year?**

Of course this changes from year to year, but has been on the increase recently. However, this is the case with many dietetic internship programs and should not be the main factor in your decision about where to apply. It is best to find the programs which most closely match your interests, and then go for it! You may be the perfect fit for Tri-County, but you won't get in if you don't apply!

### **What is the process and timeline for reviewing internship applications?**

Tri-County has many dietitians on staff, and all of us participate in reviewing the applications during February. From there, we narrow down the field to the top 20–24 applicants for interviews during March. If selected for an interview, you can do this in person or over the phone. After interviewing is concluded, we rank order our list of applicants for submission to D&D Digital.

### **With Tri-County's emphasis in community/public health nutrition, do interns get enough MNT (medical nutrition therapy) experience to be well-prepared for the RD exam?**

Absolutely! Interns in our program obtain over 500 hours of supervised practice experience in medical nutrition therapy in large, high acuity hospitals, long-term care facilities, and Tri-County Health Department clinics. Our interns have an excellent first-time pass rate on the exam, and have always scored above the national average on nutrition content.

## **Do interns work together during rotations, or are they each in a different place?**

Interns are together in the same office for some rotations, such as research and community, and work on many projects as a group. In other rotations, such as clinical and WIC, interns are at different facilities, although they may be completing the same rotation at the same time. We also have monthly intern meetings to share experiences and check progress.

## **Can I visit the program?**

We will have open house dates each fall, so please watch our website for more details ([www.tchd.org/dietetic\\_internship.htm](http://www.tchd.org/dietetic_internship.htm)). If you will be in the Denver area at another time, you may contact the internship director to see if it is possible to set up a visit with her or one of our WIC clinic dietitians. In order to maintain objectivity in reviewing internship applications, no visits will be scheduled from January through March. Visiting Tri-County before you apply is completely optional. You are also welcome to ask any questions via email or over the phone.

## **How do most interns finance the internship?**

Many interns ask how they can finance the cost of the internship tuition and living expenses for the year. While interns with us are currently not eligible to apply for student loans, many interns are able to live with friends or family during the internship, or share an apartment with a fellow intern to reduce costs. Some interns borrow money from family if needed, or rely on savings to see them through. Other interns take on a part-time job on the weekends or evenings. Some facilities that interns rotate through during the course of the internship offer free or reduced-cost meals.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation has offered over \$200,000 in scholarships each year to dietetic students and interns who are members. For more information, please visit <https://www.eatright.org/Foundation/scholarships/>. (Deadline for submission is mid-February of each year).

Your local dietetic association and other civic and private organizations may offer scholarships as well. Ask your academic advisor or financial aid office to help you get started. You may also be able to obtain deferments on student loan payments until the completion of the internship. Please contact your lender for more information and the appropriate forms.