



# ARK SPEAKING AND TRAINING

## GP's

**Objective:** To persuade GP's to engage with qualified nutritional therapists.

**Message:** Qualified Nutritional Therapists can support GP efforts to improve patient healthcare.

A GP's number one priority is patient healthcare. It's making sure that their patient gets the care and attention they need when they need it.

In Ireland, that's not always possible. We are a first world country delivering a less than first world healthcare service. Hospital waiting lists are getting longer, increasing numbers of patients are spending increasing amounts of time on trolleys and hospitals don't have enough doctors, nurses or beds to meet our healthcare demands. Coupled with that people are living longer which means that the burden on GP's and their practice is increasing.

One of the steps that GP practices have taken to ensure their patients receive the best care is to work in consultation with other medical professionals. Today, many practices engage nurses to draw blood and physiotherapists to handle muscle injuries

At the Nutritional Therapist association of Ireland, we believe that qualified nutritional therapists are also very well placed to support a GP's efforts to improve patient healthcare.

The benefit to a practice of working in consultation with other medical professionals is not just the continuity of patient care but a reduction in the pressure on the GP themselves. We believe there are other areas of patient care where the burden could be reduced further for GPs.

We believe that there are occasions when the best remedy a GP can offer patients with certain conditions is a lifestyle change rather than a prescription for a pill. These are patients that could be served by nutritional therapists and reduce the burden on the GP.

We believe that GP practices that work in consultation with other medical professionals enhance the reputation of that practice. Patients value a visit that lasts 5 minutes when the purpose of their visit was having blood drawn compared with waiting 30 minutes to have a GP do the same thing. We believe that a GP practice would enhance its reputation further if more patients with different requirements were able to avail of this type of service.

Equally, a GP practice could enhance its reputation still further by offering what would be perceived as increased patient healthcare support. For example, a GP might advise a patient that, for health reasons, they need to lose weight but are not in a position to help the patient create a plan around how to do so or guide them every step of the way. By contrast, a qualified nutritional therapist can do just that. The benefit to the



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practice is that the patient gets the diagnosis, the remedy, the plan of action and support to achieve the desired outcome.

Qualified nutritional therapists work very closely with patients and create lifestyle change plans in conjunction with the patient. The reputation of a practice is built on relationships that the practice has with its patients. The nature of the way in which qualified nutritional therapists work can only strengthen the relationship between patient and practice.

Now, we recognize that within the medical profession there is skepticism towards nutritional therapists but that is changing. In July, last year, at a medical conference in Germany/Switzerland/??, the chair of the British Medical journal, commented that the only healthcare professionals, who weren't represented at that conference but who should have been there, were nutritional therapists. So, the medical profession as we know it are starting to recognize our value.

That value is further enhanced by what we do at the Nutritional Therapists association of Ireland. Members of the NTOI, must have completed a 3-year diploma in nutritional therapy and 200 hours in clinic before they can be accepted as members and what separates our organization from other nutritional therapists is that we self-regulate, in the same way that the accounting profession and legal profession do.

Ladies and gentlemen, every one of our members can tell you stories of how they have helped patients who came to them desperate for help, helped patients who came to them claiming they had exhausted all other avenues, helped patients who had almost given up hope of finding a solution to their condition. We'd love to have a chat about we might be able to add value to the patient healthcare you offer in your practice.