



Canadian Society of
Respiratory Therapists

Société canadienne des
thérapeutes respiratoires

Leadership

Leadership

Advocacy

Défense des intérêts

Service

Service

Unity

Unité

September 30, 2010

Mrs. Jessica Richardson
Clerk
Senate Committee on Social Affairs,
Science and Technology
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

RE: Pandemic Lessons Learned

Dear Ms. Richardson:

I am writing today on behalf of the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT) to provide insight into lessons learned from the recent H1N1 pandemic in Canada. Respiratory therapists are essential front line health care providers who are often the first to assess and treat patients in respiratory distress due to influenza or other severe respiratory illness. During the H1N1 pandemic, many patients also required respiratory therapists to manage and deliver specialized mechanical ventilation techniques such as high frequency oscillation. It is therefore vital that respiratory therapists be included in discussions surrounding health human resources and equipment resources, such as the ventilator stockpile requirements during a pandemic.

The CSRT recommends that pandemic planning be continued and that appropriate resources and budget allocations are directed towards it. Infection control practices and access to personal protective equipment must be standardized nationally. Often during the H1N1 pandemic there was confusion about the use of aerosol-generating procedures, such as non-invasive ventilation, due to the lack of harmonization between federal, provincial and institutional guidelines. During the H1N1 pandemic, the CSRT provided leadership on this issue by disseminating the attached evidence-based position statement on the use of aerosol-generating medical procedures. The CSRT also recommends that timely and coordinated communication be provided for all front line health care providers, including respiratory therapists.

The CSRT provides national leadership through advocacy, service and unity to respiratory therapists in Canada. Established in 1964, the CSRT is the national professional association that represents over 2500 respiratory therapists across Canada and promotes exemplary standards of practice, conduct and performance in the provision of respiratory care.

The CSRT is committed to working with governments and health agencies on this issue and other issues affecting respiratory care and respiratory therapists. If you have any question, or should you wish to discuss further, please contact me at mlemphers@tru.ca or at the address listed above.

Sincerely,

Michael Lemphers RRT, MA
President, Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists

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