



CANADIAN SOCIETY OF RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DES THÉRAPEUTES RESPIRATOIRES

March 9, 2021

**Re: The Role of Respiratory Therapists in the Response to COVID-19**

Dear Minister of Health:

The Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT) would like to take this opportunity to commend the provincial/territorial government on its ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including implementation of the vaccine distribution plan. The CSRT would also like to bring to your attention the contributions respiratory therapists are making as part of that response and further contributions they are prepared to make moving forward.

The CSRT is the voice for Canada's growing community of respiratory therapists. The CSRT advocates for respiratory therapists, patients and families, and for the respiratory therapy profession in local communities, across Canada, and globally.

Canadian respiratory therapists are an essential part of the frontlines of Canada's healthcare response to COVID-19. Today, over 12,000 respiratory therapists are providing safe and effective care in all jurisdictions across Canada. They are experts in the management of cardiorespiratory health across the continuum of care. They are essential members of our health care workforce, working alongside doctors, nurses and other health professionals to assure safe and effective respiratory care for those affected during this time of unprecedented challenge.

Respiratory therapists are also well prepared to contribute to your province/territory's response to COVID-19 in ways that extend beyond the expert critical care for which they are more commonly recognized. Respiratory therapists are well positioned to contribute to a wide range of health systems planning, and providing care in evolving and non-traditional contexts. For example, respiratory therapists may constitute an important part of short and long-term vaccination strategies implemented in your province/territory, including administering vaccines on the frontlines.

The CSRT strongly recommends that your government consider ways that the broadly applicable skillset of respiratory therapists be optimally leveraged to support the ongoing response to COVID-19 and as part of pandemic recovery planning. Respiratory therapists have the diverse expertise required as our healthcare system continues to respond to the current crisis and as we look ahead to post-pandemic operations. Actively engaging respiratory therapists in the planning process will be an essential part of optimizing their knowledge and expertise across the healthcare system while meeting the urgent and growing provincial/territorial demands to get all health care workers vaccinated.

Respiratory therapists are deserving of the same recognition being regularly provided by your government to their colleagues in other health disciplines. We appreciate any efforts your government may have made to date to recognize the substantial contributions of respiratory therapists throughout this crisis and it is imperative that you continue to engage them during this infectious pandemic as subject matter experts who can provide active cardiorespiratory care and proactively engage in vaccination strategies.

On behalf of the CSRT, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter. Should you like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew West", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Andrew West, CEO  
Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists