



CANADIAN SOCIETY OF RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DES THÉRAPEUTES RESPIRATOIRES

October 26, 2020

CSRT Advocacy and RT Week 2020

Dear CSRT members,

As we begin [RT Week 2020](#), many of you have no doubt planned activities that will celebrate the respiratory therapy profession alongside your colleagues. The CSRT looks forward to celebrating RT week together with you. Although the format of RT Week celebrations may have changed due to the pandemic, the pride we all share in the profession has not. We hope that alongside the entire community, you will join in on the exciting activities the CSRT has planned.

In a year that has been characterized by the challenges facing all of society, there couldn't be a better time to reflect on the advocacy efforts being undertaken to promote and raise the profile of the respiratory therapy profession lately. In light of contributions made in the fight against COVID-19, 2020 has been a year when the respiratory therapy profession received a record-breaking level of public attention. The CSRT has been exceptionally proud to represent you and the profession through this time.

As you may have noticed, the CSRT has been steadily augmenting its advocacy activities in recent years. Under the leadership of the CSRT Board of Directors, this shift towards enhanced advocacy was a direct result of an innovative refocus of CSRT priorities. This refocus has positioned the CSRT well to leverage a range of opportunities to highlight the expertise and contributions the respiratory therapy community through the pandemic.

Representing the Profession Nationally and Internationally

In recent years, the CSRT has enhanced the profession's influence by establishing collaborative relationships with a number of [national organizations](#). The CSRT works together with these partners to establish the profession's voice on issues of importance to members and stakeholders across Canada and around the world.

Over the past year the CSRT has also established partnerships in direct response to the challenges being faced by respiratory therapists and all Canadians due the pandemic. For example, the CSRT has worked actively working alongside the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada to support procurement ventilators from manufacturers domestically and internationally. The relationship established with PHAC enabled the CSRT to make available a repository of resources for each ventilator model currently in the [National Emergency Strategic Stockpile \(NESS\)](#) on the CSRT website to support RTs across the country who may use these in their practice.

In collaboration with the federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the CSRT also provided expert advice on a range of *made in Canada* innovative ventilator designs. As a result, the innovative ventilator designs are already receiving necessary Health Canada approvals are being prepared for inclusion in the NESS.

Alongside PHAC, the CSRT continues to actively work with local jurisdictions to provide support that ensures there exists adequate supply of effective ventilators across the country to meet the demands of potential health system surges.

Advocating for RTs at the Local Level

Over the past year many provincial governments took the initiative to recognize the services provided by many health professionals as essential in face of the pandemic. The CSRT monitored this very carefully and took swift action in several instances where respiratory therapists and anesthesia assistants were overlooked by these policies.

The CSRT was pleased to report to members that our advocacy initiatives, such as those aimed at the [Government of Ontario](#), helped ensure RTs were recognized fairly their contributions. Ensuring that RTs are advocated for on issues of local concern will serve to strengthen the public understanding of the profession across the country. We will continue advocate locally and to empower RTs to do the same when local issues arise, whether these are related to the pandemic, or to RT practice beyond the pandemic.

Growing Public Awareness of the Profession

Over the past year in particular, the CSRT has engaged all major media outlets across Canada through direct involvement with interviews, and by connecting media with front-line RTs. As reported to you before, this never before seen level of media engagement has positioned respiratory therapists well to influence the public narrative and has increased the profile of the profession in the public eye.

We hear from our members that awareness of the profession and recognition of the contributions respiratory therapists make everyday remain top priorities. Much has been accomplished over that past year is addressing this priority, but our work together is not done. As a next step, the CSRT will soon release a digital campaign aimed at the public that builds on the momentum gained over the past year and will further enhance public awareness of the profession.

Through initiatives like those described above, the profession of respiratory therapy will receive the recognition earned by way of the hard work, expertise and compassionate care provided by RTs everywhere each day.

Thank you for your steadfast professionalism and dedication through what has been a very challenging year. The CSRT will also remain steadfast in its support for you, for all RTs, and the RT profession as we work together to face the challenges ahead.

All the best for a wonderful RT Week!

Dr. Andrew West, CEO
Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists