

## Respiratory Therapy Week Guide CSRT 2023

The CSRT proclaims the last week in October as Respiratory Therapy Week in Canada, to celebrate the respiratory therapy profession and the outstanding dedication and passion of RTs.

This includes all areas of respiratory therapy practice, including anesthesia assistance.

RT Week in Canada is about advocating and creating awareness about respiratory therapy.

With this in mind, we offer you some ideas about different ways you can participate in RT Week.

### **Use social media**

Use #RTWeek2023 when you share or post RT Week-related content on social media.

### **Raise awareness of respiratory therapy in your place of work or school**

There are many ways to raise awareness of what respiratory therapists do, in your workplace or school. Set up an information table in a high-traffic area, organize an RT-skills competition for your peers, have a bake sale with funds going to a good cause, hang a banner, etc.

Use the printable and digital resources available on the [CSRT RT Week page](#).

You can also share information about respiratory therapy throughout your organization by using their dissemination channels:

- Newsletter mention or short article
- Social media post
- Information sheet on bulletin board

### **Create a video**

Create a short video to share, informative or not, to highlight your peers and the work you do. Make sure you take into account any patients' privacy and organization policies while making the video.

### **Organize an RT Week Proclamation**

This is a relatively easy activity to complete successfully. Contact your city councillor or the Mayor of your city and ask the city council to consider proclaiming the last week of October as Respiratory Therapy Week. We have created a [template letter](#) you can use, just fill in the necessary information and send to your representative. If you get a positive response, don't forget to inform your colleagues, alert the local media and of course send the information to the CSRT for distribution. You should allow at least three weeks for this activity depending on how often city council is in session. A longer timeline will give you ample opportunity to alert all interested parties.

### **Provide a ready-to-print human interest story**

*A-day-in-the-life-of-an-RT* that can be tailored to individual communities and then distributed to community newspapers. See next page for sample story.

## A day in the life of a Respiratory Therapist

A day in the life of... Taylor

Taylor has an important, life-saving job, but their profession is one that most people would not be able to describe. They are a registered respiratory therapist (RRT). Here is a snapshot of how Taylor spends their day.

Their shift starts in the hospital report room at 7AM - coffee in hand, they are prepared for the 12-hour shift ahead of them. With their ever-present stethoscope around their neck and a pen in their pocket, Taylor learns from their co-worker, who is finishing the night shift, about the patient requirements for the day - six patients need oxygen assessments; four patients with tracheostomy tubes need care; a breathing test has been ordered for a patient; and arterial blood gas needs to be drawn before a patient is sent home on oxygen.

At 7:15 AM, just as the report is finished, a "Code Blue" is called in the emergency room. Taylor rushes to ER. They proceed to intubate and ventilate the patient to keep her airway open. They help the team administer life-saving medications through the endotracheal tube. After 40 minutes of constant efforts to resuscitate the patient, the team is unsuccessful. Her grieving family arrives and as Taylor holds back tears they say "thank you for trying to save her".

It's now 8:05 AM. Taylor heads off to begin treatment of their 12 patients. As they are about to enter the patient wards, their pager goes off. They are needed to attend a delivery for a premature infant. The baby is born at just 32 weeks but cries vigorously. Taylor gives the baby oxygen and positive pressure to open up his tiny lungs. Although the baby is small, he is in good health and his lungs are working well. Mom, Dad and Grandparents cry with joy at this tiny miracle.

Throughout the rest of Taylor's shift, they educate a patient with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) about his inhaled medications and discusses smoking cessation options. They take an arterial blood gas and set up a woman for oxygen at home to improve her shortness of breath with activities of daily living. Taylor monitors patients in the intensive care unit on mechanical ventilators. They assess patients that require oxygen and those with artificial airways such as tracheostomy tubes. They educate patients and other health care professionals about their care.

You may wonder what type of health care professional gets to work in a variety of settings like Taylor. Taylor is a registered respiratory therapist. Not every respiratory therapist has a shift like Taylor's. Among others, some work in the operating room as anesthesia assistants, others perform pulmonary function testing, research, work in home care or educate students. Respiratory therapists are important members of teams that provide care in hospitals, in clinics, in the community and in patients' homes.

The cycle of life and death is one of the profound and amazing things that a respiratory therapist gets to impact in the course of a day's work. Whether it is in acute care, health prevention and promotion or diagnostic testing, the message is the same - respiratory therapists are dedicated to better breathing.