



Single entry point for the practice of respiratory therapy by qualified personnel

CSRT Position

In the interest of patient and public safety, the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT) recommends that provincial governments, regulatory agencies, and employers ensure a single entry point for the practice of respiratory therapy, that is, the Registered Respiratory Therapist.

The CSRT further recommends that government agencies work with the regulatory bodies of the profession and/or the national and provincial professional respiratory therapy associations to ensure only Registered Respiratory Therapists perform the duties of a respiratory therapist. In the event that such legislation or regulatory body is not yet in place, it is recommended, in the interest of public safety, that all parties work together to develop the appropriate public protection legislation and comprehensive regulations.

Background

In some jurisdictions in Canada, there are no regulations governing who can perform respiratory therapy services, or existing regulations are sufficiently relaxed that inappropriately prepared individuals may be hired to perform these procedures. This can lead to dangerous situations both for the person receiving the procedure and the person performing it.

As the national professional association of health care providers qualified to perform respiratory therapy procedures, the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists has an obligation to advocate for the highest standards of care and address safety concerns of patients and care providers in the field of respiratory therapy.

Rationale

The CSRT certification exam provided by the Canadian Board for Respiratory Care (CBRC) is the Canadian benchmark for the practice of respiratory therapy. Individuals eligible for the CSRT credential have completed a comprehensive training and education program. These education programs, that include didactic and clinical components, have been accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Respiratory Therapy Education (CoARTE).

Completion of such an education program demonstrates that the individual has gained the knowledge, skills and judgement outlined in a nationally validated competency profile. The competency profiles are established through a process that involves validation by key stakeholders from across Canada and that identifies each element required to acquire the knowledge, skills and judgement essential for safe entry to practice. Therefore, individuals who successfully pass the certification exam are demonstrably competent professionals who can be trusted to serve the Canadian public safely in the field of respiratory therapy.

The process of defining entry-level qualifications for respiratory therapists provides the public with safe and best practice care within established standards and scopes of practice. As a result, employers have the benefit of a workforce that follows established risk management processes, and that provides services within defined scopes of practice and the CSRT Code of Ethics.

The CSRT believes the general public, regardless of their location in Canada, has the right to access to quality care and treatment in a safe environment and that employers should have access to respiratory therapists of demonstrated competence.