



The Respiratory Therapists Society of Nova Scotia

October 2005

An Information fact sheet about Self-Regulation

The top agenda item for the RTSNS is obtaining a self-regulating college. As a member you may be asking why is this necessary? How will it benefit me? What does self-regulation and a college mean? I hope the following will help to clarify some of these questions.

A self-regulating College sets the standards for the profession and ensures compliances with provincial acts and related laws. A college is not an educational facility but is a professional regulatory body. There is a registrar and a board of directors. The board consists of RRT's elected by the membership as well as public members appointed by the government. Their role is to serve and protect the public's interest, set the standards for entry to practice as well as continuation of practice, develop a code of ethics and enforce legislation, regulation, codes and bylaws. The board must also develop committees to regulated matters such as registration, quality assurance, patient relations, complaints, and fitness to practice. Colleges are responsible for investigating complaints from the public and disciplining members for issues such as professional misconduct, professional incompetence and sexual misconduct.

The need to protect the public (and remember you are also a member of the public) is to ensure that the people caring for them have been properly trained and continue to keep themselves educated in current practice. Think about it, would you trust a doctor who hasn't read a journal, textbook or attended a lecture since they started to practice? Would you want your parent, spouse or child being cared for by an RRT who has not stayed current or is incompetent? As people take a

P.O. Box 31219, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 5Y1

greater role in their care, and are more informed than in the past, we must stay current to provide them with the care they desire.

In Nova Scotia it is currently the practice for individual employers to set the criteria that you be a member in good standing with the CSRT. But they legally have at their discretion whether or not to follow this. As a matter of fact the CSRT has received phone calls from employers in non-regulated provinces asking questions such as “ I have a new graduate who is doing a good job and I would like to continue to employ them but they have failed their CBRC exam 3 times, can I still employ them?” If you think the answer is automatically no then think again. The answer from CSRT is that they do not regulate the profession and it is up to the individual employers in non-regulated provinces to determine employment criteria. This means that in the above example the employer could technically continue to employ this person under the current system.

We as Respiratory Therapists are best able to determine what our scope of practice is, who should be permitted to practice, and how it is practiced. This can be achieved with a self-regulated college. We are under a time crunch to form a college. The CSRT has developed a strategic plan that has them withdrawing themselves from any regulating or disciplinary roles by the end of December 2006. (For further information please see the CSRT website- the Strategic plan is under “about” then “annual reports”). Please note the sections that state:

- ” For the transition period, starting September 2005, where there is no licensing body, regulatory services provided by the CSRT, including disciplinary activities and use of the CSRT RRT credential, will apply only to those registered respiratory therapists who are members in good standing with the CSRT”.

- “Two of our current activities are providing a recognized RRT credential and addressing complaints and discipline issues regarding individuals that hold our credential. As an internationally recognized credential, the CSRT RRT in itself is considered an asset. At the 2005 AGM we will be forwarding bylaws that limit recognition of the credential by the CSRT to current members only. Part of limiting this credential recognition also includes limiting expenses related to complaints and discipline proceedings to individuals that are current members only.”(note this bylaw passed and is in effect)

Currently 4 provinces have colleges with a 5th to be in place by Christmas. This means that over 75% of the RT’s in Canada are regulated. The CSRT has been forced to develop a new role as an advocate and facilitator. There is an Alliance of the regulated colleges that is currently shaping the role of RT’s in the country and we need to become a part of this.

The RTSNS has been working toward this goal for over 7 years. We have retained legal council and have a meeting at the Ministry of Health offices on October 19th and will be updating you at the fall general meeting.

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If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me by email at caroldonaldson@eastlink.ca. For those of you wondering who I am, I grew up in Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour but completed my RRT training in Boston in 1990. I worked at Toronto General Hospital for 13 years and since moving back home in February 2004 have been working with VitalAire. I became a director-at-large on the RTSNS executive May 2004 and became President May 2005. I look forward to seeing you at the Fall General Meeting. I encourage you to attend and take an active role in the development of Respiratory Therapy in Nova Scotia.

Thank You

Carol Donaldson RRT