



**2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday, November 5, 2020, 5:00 pm – 6:00pm

Followed by the NSCRT Virtual Education Sessions

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: 39 On-line for quorum. List attached

Regrets: Jasmine Ghosn, Lauren Randall

Proxies: Heather Johnston

1. Call to Order: Noel Pendergast called the meeting to order at: 1706 hrs. He acknowledged that we are on unceded Mi`kma`ki territory and are actively engaging in improvement of relationships with the African Nova Scotia communities.

Noel provided specific directions to the attendees on how to participate in this, our first virtual annual general meeting.

2. Determination of Quorum: Darrah confirmed 39 members in attendance

3. Approval of agenda: **Motion:** To approve the agenda that was posted.  
**Moved:** Adam Gillis; **Seconded:** Corry Fitzgerald **Motion Carried**

4. Approval of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, October 25, 2019.  
**Motion:** To approve Minutes as circulated.  
**Moved:** Adam Gillis , **Seconded:** Jamie Murphy **Motion Carried**

5. Action Items and Decisions

5.1 Nominations/election of Board Members

On behalf of the NSCRT Noel said thank you to Darrah, Jamie, Danette, for their service on the Board over the last several years. Adam Gillis, Nominations Committee Chair, presented the new acclaimed directors at large: Ian Ayles and Melissa Berry and thanked them for joining the Board of Directors of the College.

Noel announced that the Board is adding a special by-law to allow us to hold a special election to elect a new president-elect. To be compliant with the Respiratory Therapists Act, we are required to have a president-elect and a past-president on the Board at the same time. Noel advised that a notice of this election will go out in the new year and there will be a call for nominees.

## 5.2 Review audited financial statements and Appointment of Auditors:

Corry Fitzgerald presented and reviewed the audited financial statements with the attendees. There were no issues with the financial records that were reviewed by the auditors Peverill and Associates and the audit was complete.

Corry reviewed the reserved funds in detail to explain the reasons for the current balances in each fund. He also highlighted any budget lines that were higher than in past years to explain the changes.

**Motion:** To approve the audited financial statements

**Moved:** Corry Fitzgerald    **Seconded:** Darrah Kennie    **Motion Carried**

Corry advised the membership that the Board is satisfied with the audit services we received from Peverill and Associates and that the Board is recommending we reappoint them.

**Motion:** To reappoint Peverill and Associates as our auditors for the upcoming year.

**Moved:** Corry Fitzgerald    **Seconded:** Adam Gillis    **Motion Carried**

Noel thanked the Board members, the Treasurer and Shannon, and Tara for their roles in the fiscal management of the NSCRT.

## 6. Discussion and Information Sharing

### 6.1 Reports from the Board

- 2019-2020 Annual Report

The attendees were asked if they have any questions or comments about the 2019-2020 annual report. No questions or comments received.

- Treasurer's Report and setting of Annual Licensing Fees

Corry Fitzgerald presented the Treasurer's report to the attendees and updated our financial position for the first six months of the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Restricted funds are going to be used for projects and there have been expenses related to complaints that will draw on the contingency fund.

Investments were reviewed: GICs that were cashed out, current GICs and our laddering strategy for investing.

The board is reviewing and updating the finance policy to incorporate appropriate use of comprehensive electronic banking services.

This year our expenses have been reduced due to no in-person meetings and therefore no required travel. Our financial position remains healthy and therefore there will be no increase in license fees for 2020-2021.

No questions or comments received.

- 2020 Interim Report

Tara reviewed the interim report – 306 members renewed and 22 new registrations. There has been no real growth in membership in the last number of years and about 20% of our membership are soon coming to retirement eligibility. This is a concern regarding supply of RRTs in the near future.

The board chose to not audit professional portfolios this year as we felt the workload on RRTs was increased due to COVID19 and did not want to further tax the membership.

There were many meetings of the Operational Emergency Team of the NSCRT to manage COVID 19 demands. The OET worked with DHW and the NSRHPN on many issues related to licensing and delivery of care during the pandemic emergency. Collaboration continued regularly throughout the state of emergency. We have been keeping in touch with membership to understand needs for policy development to respond to new issues related to pandemic.

Normal activities and committee work have resumed as the most urgent work related to the pandemic is completed.

Accreditation Canada – we became a provincial client of AC which allows the NSCRT to receive the full accreditation report. Dalhousie School of Health Sciences is undergoing audit this year and Shannon McDonald is the NSCRT representative on the survey team.

CBRC- exam was postponed to September and underwent virtual proctoring. Exam was completed as planned.

NARTRB updates were reviewed.

Updates on each NSCRT Committee were provided.

Call for questions about the Interim report – no questions or comments received.

Annual General Meeting Adjourned at 18:06 hr .

Special Business

7.0 Open forum - the Education Forum

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Attachments:

1. Attendance List
2. Interim Report

<b>2020 NSCRT Annual General Meeting Attendees</b>
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<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>
Almeida	Felicia
Baxter-Brown	Brandi
Berry	Melissa
Bethune	Louanna
Boudreau	Tara
Bourque	Glen
Breen	Michael
Chamberlaine	Jillian
Conrad	Wendy
Dale	Andrea
Dibbin	Janice
Fitzgerald	Corry
Fitzgerald	Andrea
Gillis	Adam
Hamilton-McNutt	Karen
Hancock	Erica
Hicks	Debbie
Hooper	Kim
Johnston	Kathy
Keeling	Scott
Kelly	Deryck
Kennie	Darrah
Leahy	Amber
Marshall	Jocelyn
McDonald	Shannon
McIntyre	Danette
Miller	Nathan
Mott	Andrew
Murphy	Jamie
Nemirovsky	Nicole
Nurmenova	Diana
Pendergast	Noel
Peterson	Ashleigh
Richard	Monique
Riley	Erin
Spurr	Kathy
Taylor	Janice

Tilley	Alicia
Wentzell	Jessica
<b>Total attendees for quorum</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>Late Arrivals</b>
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Blades	Amber
Davison	Cheri
Faye	Cheryl
Frail	Tanya
Frank	Norma
Heath	Marlene
MacDonald	Margaret
McAndrew	Erin
Rose	Melissa
Thompson	Kim

<b>RT Students - Education Forum Only</b>
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Collins	Rylee
Duncan	Caitlyn
MacCallum	Marcy
McNevin	Sarah
Zorogole	Zelyka

*2020 Interim Report*

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**Registration**

On April 1, 2020, there were 306 licensed NSCRT members.

- Currently there are 322 licensed members. Overall, membership with the NSCRT remains stable with no growth for the last two year. This can be attributed to small graduating classes, retirements and out of province transfers.
- Demographics:
  - Graph 1: 22 members did not renew for 2020-2021. Review graph

- Graph 2: age distribution
  - Increase in 25-30 year olds last couple of years
  - 30% under age of 30
  - 20% eligible to retire, issue with limited to no growth in membership, exacerbated by expanding employment opportunities
- Graph 3, 4, 5: incoming members since April 1 2020
  - 11 graduates, primarily from Dal
  - Jurisdictional transfers: usually majority from NB but this year 5 from ON and 3 from AB – unusual to have so many applicants from these provinces.
  - 0 transfers from NB as many jobs available.
- Secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSCRT opted not to complete professional portfolio audits for the 2019-2020 license year. Period of intense learning for RTs implementing new practices, ongoing learning opportunities. Audits will resume following renewal in 2021.

### **Operations Update**

#### **Internal**

- On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.
- In response to the global pandemic, the Government of Nova Scotia declared a state of emergency on March 22, 2020.
- The NSCRT Board of Directors approved a pandemic plan and established an Operation Emergency Team (OET) to execute the emergency response.

- The OET met via video conferencing multiple times a week. These meetings allowed the team to share new information, assess ongoing communication needs with stakeholders and develop timely responses to this very dynamic situation.
- The OET was in close, regular contact with the NS Department of Health and Wellness, Employers, the Dalhousie University Respiratory Therapy Program faculty, other healthcare regulators across the province, respiratory therapy regulators across Canada and NSCRT members.
- With a potential shortage of RRTs looming, the team established policies to allow for the licensing of retired RTs and RT students in their final year of study. 2 retirees and 7 students were granted temporary pandemic licenses.

### **Provincial**

#### *Department of Health and Wellness (DHW):*

- There has been ongoing communication and collaboration with the DHW throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- regular updates regarding the activities of the College related to COVID-19, including: issuing of temporary licenses, the respiratory therapy program and resumption of student clinical placements and the NSCRT recommendations for RTs working in community care and clinics.
- Despite the exceptional circumstances and increased workload of the DHW during this time, they were supportive of the work of the College and quick to respond to all inquires.



*Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (NSRHPN):*

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSRHPN received almost daily updates and information sharing from the Network.
- This included the sharing of resources and individual regulatory work related to the pandemic.
- In addition to regular email correspondence, two (2) NSRHPN information sharing virtual meetings were held. The Department of Health and Wellness participated in both.
- Topics discussed included addressing pandemic licensing issues, completion of educational programs halted by the pandemic, implications for the future of each profession with delayed graduations, and discussions on return to work plans – this included the requirement for all members to submit a private sector return to work plan to the DHW that supported the government’s reopening plan. The plans were reviewed and approved by Dr. Strang.
- As the work related to the pandemic became more manageable, Network working groups reconvened virtually to continue work on various projects.

Tara sits on two working groups with the Network:

1. Messages to the Public working group tasked with developing a checklist for regulatory bodies to reference containing what information should be provided on public websites including information related to the complaints process.
2. The Registration Appeals Committee working group was established to review policy related to the Network registration appeal review process and to explore legislative

barriers and enhanced processes for allowing Network members with their own registration appeal legislation to utilize the Network process.

Shannon also sits on two working groups:

1. The Innovation in Regulation working group developed to review possible changes to legislation for new professions moving to self-regulation.
2. Standards of Good Regulation working group tasked with drafting Standards of Good Regulation for professional regulatory bodies in Nova Scotia. These standards would represent benchmarks against which regulators can measure their performance as a quality improvement process.

*Accreditation Canada:*

- As of June 9, 2020, the NSCRT is a provincial client with Health Standards Organization (HSO).
- This entitles the College to detailed accreditation reports related to the Dalhousie University Respiratory Therapy Program and gives us a seat on the EQual Program Council .
- EQual program Council role is to develop and implement guidelines and criteria related to accreditation of educational programs.
- Dals accreditation status has been extended and they will be undergoing an onsite visit in February 2021. Deputy Registrar, Shannon McDonald, has been appointed as a survey team member for the accreditation visit.

- Secondary to COVID-19, currently site visits have been amended to a hybrid model with only one member of the survey team on site and the remaining members of the team participating virtually.
- The new virtual on-site review model was reviewed at the last EQual Program Council Meeting.
- The following is a summary of details related to the virtual on-site review model:

- Requirements have been revised for what can be assessed through documentation and what explicitly requires on-site review

- Hybrid model: One member of the survey team is present at the site(s) to conduct the site review, the rest complete the on-site review virtually

- On-site surveyor must be a member of the profession of the program being accredited. This individual is usually from the region secondary to current travel restrictions.

- Additional IT supports have been put in place to support this model. Microsoft Teams is the platform being used by the survey teams.

- Training resources have been implemented for survey teams to ensure they are prepared for this new model

- On-site reviews have been extended to 5 days from 3 days to prevent fatigue related to virtual

meetings

- The review of additional evidence by surveyors is now conducted off site
- Following the first virtual on-site review, the model will be evaluated by surveyors and stakeholder feedback for necessary changes.
- Although the virtual on-site review has been implemented to deal with the current ongoing pandemic, some of the changes will be permanent such as: in advance digital document review.
- It is anticipated that this model will continue through the spring of 2021.

Shannon McDonald has been approved as a survey team member will participate in the virtual on-site. The representative of the regulatory body brings a unique perspective to the assessment as they are knowledgeable about the provincial requirements related to entry-to-practice competencies and the provincial regulatory issues.

### National

*Canadian Board for Respiratory Care (CBRC):*

- Following consultation with accredited respiratory therapy programs across Canada regarding program completion dates, the CBRC postponed the administration of the July 2020 exam writing to August 17.
- As the CBRC prepared for the exam, they were made aware that there were not sufficient testing sites available because of the restrictions in place in each province secondary to COVID.
- The exam had to be moved to online with a virtual proctoring system.
- Date availability required the exam to be further postponed until September.

- There were only minor issues with the exam and primarily related to candidate connectivity.
- The CBRC has a back up exam and date in place to deal with these issues. The January exam date has already been booked for virtual proctoring to prevent delays should restrictions remain in place.
- CBRC AGM November 25, 2020

*National Alliance of Respiratory Therapy Regulatory Bodies (NARTRB):*

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the spring and fall general business meetings have been cancelled. A virtual AGM will still take place on November 12 and will entail a short business meeting to address pressing issues, such as:

1. Revisions to the National Competency Framework (NCF) and next steps...likely on hold.
  - a. May be changes related to evaluation through simulation
2. New Strategic Plan
  - Adopt the strategic plan from November 2019
  - Discussion regarding activities moving forward related to goals and priorities described in the Strategic Planning Session Report
3. Accreditation updates from each province

*Committee updates:*

Complaints Committee:

The Committee reviewed two complaints this year. Both complaints were dismissed.

Professional Conduct Committee:

The College has not referred any files to the Professional Conduct Committee in 2020.

Registration Appeals Committee:

The College has not received any registration appeals in 2020.

Nominations Committee:

NSCRT Past-President, Adam Gillis, served as Chair of the Nominations Committee. Adam's work with the Committee was supported by two NSCRT active practice members, Laura Betts and James Fitzpatrick.

The NSCRT had two (2) vacant positions for a director-at-large for the upcoming election.

The Nominations Committee put forward two (2) names as nominees to the Board of Directors for approval. Ian Ayles and Mellissa Berry were acclaimed as Directors-at-Large. The Board welcomes Ian and Melissa.

Credentials Committee:

- The work of the Credentials Committee was impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Following the cessation of clinical placements of Dalhousie University students secondary to the pandemic, students were unable to meet the necessary requirements for program completion in the usual timeframe.

- The Committee participated in many collaborative discussions with the NSCRT Executive Committee and Dalhousie University regarding the development of a plan to safely return students to clinical placements allowing for program completion.
- Thanks to the hard work of the Dalhousie Respiratory Therapy faculty, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year cohort of students were able to safely resume their clinical rotations during the summer months with program completion in early August.
- The Committee has resumed regular duties and is in the final stage of development with the E-Volve Self-Assessment tool.
- The development of the online platform and content delivery was delayed due to COVID-19, so the implementation of the self-assessment tool will be postponed until the 2022 renewal.
- This will allow the Committee enough time to provide the membership with a comprehensive orientation to the platform prior to it going live.
- For the 2021-2022 renewal process, members will be expected to reflect on their practice and independently identify their learning goals as they did with the 2020-2021 license renewal.
- The E-Volve e-Learning module for renewing members and the E-Volve jurisprudence exam for initial applicants was launched this year. Feedback on both platforms was positive. There is ongoing development of the question bank for both of these platforms.
- The Committee will be holding a meeting this month to discuss priorities for the upcoming year.
- The Committee will focus on

- revisions to the registration page of the NSCRT website,
- development of a new Internationally Educated Healthcare Professional Applicant manual,
- and policy development related to registration.

The Committee will be seeking participation from the membership to sit on working groups to complete this work.

Professional Practice:

The Professional Practice Committee continued work on the development of a documentation guideline. Following the completion of a final draft, the guideline was circulated to stakeholders for feedback. This feedback was incorporated into the document and on September 17 the document was approved by the Board of Directors. The Committee will reconvene later this fall to discuss upcoming projects which will include creation of a new code of ethics and standards of practice.