



Position Statement: Vaccine Hesitancy – A letter to NSCRT members

Health Canada recently released a statement due to vaccine hesitancy and the recent resurgence of measles cases in Canada. The committee's report emphatically reminded regulatory bodies of their responsibility in ensuring their members provide accurate scientific information to patients. They also concluded that the influence of social media has resulted in a significant negative perception on the use of vaccination.

Vaccine hesitancy is described as a delay in acceptance or refusal to vaccinate, despite the availability of vaccination services.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccination is one of the most successful public health interventions that has led to the control of or elimination of once common diseases. Vaccine hesitancy is now one of the top 10 threats to global health, despite robust evidence showing the effectiveness and safety of vaccines.

Health care professionals are among the most trusted sources of information regarding vaccination. As per the NSCRT Standards of Practice, Respiratory Therapists have a responsibility to communicate evidence-based information in their daily practice and can play a critical role in promoting vaccine acceptance in Canada.

The NSCRT has a responsibility to ensure members are practicing ethically and safely. This includes the provision of accurate information regarding vaccinations. NSCRT members are responsible for;

- a) Differentiating between personal beliefs regarding immunization and the scientific evidence supporting vaccine effectiveness;
- b) Combating misinformation and decreasing the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases by providing scientific based advice and options when discussing vaccination in the delivery of care;
- c) Not promoting anti-vaccination messages or “alternative therapies”; and
- d) Using social media appropriately (see [NSCRT Social Media Guideline](#))

It is important to note that distribution of false or misleading information regarding vaccinations by a regulated health care professional has resulted in disciplinary measures by their regulatory body.

The following links are the most up-to-date resources on vaccination in Canada. The NSCRT encourages you to familiarize yourself with them as a means of providing accurate, evidence-based information to Nova Scotians.

- [Government of Canada, Vaccines and Immunization](#)
- [Immunize Canada](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society](#)
- [Canadian Vaccination Evidence Resource and Exchange Centre \(CANVax\)](#)