

The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Alberta (CMLTA) is the provincial regulatory body for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs). The CMLTA is entrusted with regulating the professional practice of MLTs in a manner which enhances patient safety and preserves public protection.

MLTs are responsible and accountable and must adhere to professional standards and guiding principles germane to the practice of medical laboratory science, including: the CMLTA Standards of Practice; the CMLTA Code of Ethics; the Health Professions Act; and the Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulation.

The CMLTA prepares and publishes Practice Advisory Statements as a means to assist and guide MLTs in the provision of safe, competent, and ethical healthcare services. Practice Advisory Statements support, but do not replace the exercise of professional judgment by MLTs.

Continued Competence and Profession Evolution Practice Advisory Statement

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) establishes the national Competency Profiles and certification examinations for three medical laboratory science professions:

- a) General MLT
- b) Diagnostic Cytology MLT
- c) Clinical Genetics MLT

The CMLTA register categories pursuant to Section 2 of the *Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulation* of Alberta correspond to these Competency Profiles and areas of certification. As the field of medical laboratory science continually evolves with the introduction of new techniques, technologies, and methodologies; the Competency Profiles are periodically revised and updated to reflect these new advancements. Thus, the scope of practice of the MLT from years past is much different than that of the MLT graduate of today. The register categories established in legislation may be revised; however, it would be only in response to a new and discrete classification of MLTs not reflected in any of the three established register categories.

Competent practice in the workplace is a shared responsibility of the MLT and the employer. Pursuant to the *Code of Ethics - Boundaries of Competence*, a Regulated Member must limit her practice to those techniques and procedures which the Regulated Member is competent and currently authorized to perform by virtue of education and experience, and is consistent with the *Standards of Practice*. If the Regulated Member is required to perform outside of the Competency Profile on which CSMLS certification is based and external to her area of competence, the employer and Regulated Member must determine the additional training, testing, and ongoing competency assessment necessary to address gaps in formal education (didactic and/or clinical) and work experience. Examples include the Cytotechnologist required to perform histology duties, the General MLT or Cytotechnologist required to perform molecular duties, and the General MLT or Cytotechnologist performing Pathology Assistant (PA) duties.

Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) offered by the CSMLS, including legal defence coverage, is only applicable to competencies outlined on the original Competency Profile corresponding to the certification examination challenged by an individual. Thus, an MLT with CSMLS certification obtained several years ago does not have PLI coverage and protection if performing laboratory duties reflected on newer Competency Profiles. The CSMLS has a competency assessment process for extended PLI for Regulated Members who choose to have their education and experience assessed in competencies that are outside of the national competencies tested on their original certification.

Regulated Members have statutory duty to ensure they are competent, safe, and ethical practitioners and patient safety and public protection are paramount in the performance of their MLT duties. Much the same, employers must abide by the standards established for laboratory and facility accreditation to ensure risk and liability are minimized for the patient, staff, and the institution.

