

Volume 7, Issue 1 - February 2018

PRESIDENT'S POINT OF VIEW

I am honoured to begin my tenure as your 2018 CMLTA President. I have had the privilege of being mentored by the CMLTA Council since 2015 and have participated in the CMLTA strategic planning over the last three years. I look forward with confidence to achieving the CMLTA's strategic goals in the coming year.

Several of the previous President's messages addressed change and how we manage change. Here we are in 2018, and the topic of change is once again on the forefront with the recent announcement that construction will begin in 2019 on Edmonton's integrated Superlab. In this message I would like to discuss ; why do we have to keep changing?

We work in a profession that is experiencing technological advancements at enormous speed. For example, new lab methodologies used in Alberta's Newborn Screening Program allow us to diagnose diseases, like Cystic Fibrosis (CF), at birth. That is huge; twenty years ago, CF was not diagnosed until symptoms started to appear and by then, irreversible lung damage had already occurred. Early diagnosis of CF has a powerful impact on patient outcome and MLTs are the professionals performing the laboratory tests that make that diagnosis. Point of Care Testing has also been a game changer. Laboratory test results are now available at a patient's bedside, and although these tests are not always performed by MLTs, they impact our profession because they simulate traditional laboratory testing methodologies.

Why do we have to keep changing? Because staying in the present would hold us back; it would place limitations on the positive outcomes that MLTs offer Albertans. Accurate, timely, and affordable laboratory testing is now being performed with automation replacing laboratory tests that were once performed manually by MLTs. As new laboratory tests are introduced, the services that MLTs provide are

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NOMINATIONS

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RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

DEADLINE: December 31, 2018

[Click here for details](#)

becoming even more valuable and the outcomes realized by these innovations lead directly to better patient care. The future presents us with opportunities to do even better as healthcare professionals, and the opportunities can be achieved even faster when we adopt a mindset that embraces change.

I graduated in 1987, and my first exposure to change in the laboratory was during the lab restructuring in the early 1990s. There were a lot of unknowns during that time, but at the end of it all, many of us still had jobs; they were just different jobs. We went through a similar restructuring in 2010, more changes, and once again, here we are still working as MLTs. These changes can be unsettling, but those of us that have been through this already know that the changes in the coming months will also come with opportunities. It's easy to stay with what you know, but if you want to grow as an MLT professional, don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone; embrace the changes and try something new (but please don't leave the profession, as Alberta needs MLTs). I look forward to the new Superlab with excitement; the latest equipment, new opportunities, and new friendships. I encourage our Regulated Members to be part of the change and embrace the future as an opportunity to live, learn and grow as medical laboratory professionals.

The CMLTA is committed to protecting and serving the public and its Regulated Members and that will not change in the coming months. I am excited to be part of a team that includes our dedicated board and passionate staff. I invite you to learn more about governance and the CMLTA by visiting the [CMLTA website](#).

Shelly Stevens, MLT
2018 CMLTA President

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The CMLTA Council convened on November 18, 2017 for a regularly scheduled Council meeting. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Approved the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan with key initiatives/projects in the areas of registration, continued competence, complaints and professional discipline, operational excellence, and governance practices.

- Approved the 2018 meeting schedule for Council and the Legislation Sub-Committee.
- Approved the 2018-2020 budget, including expenditures for new software to replace outdated database.
- Appointed Councilors Shelly Stevens to 2018 Council President and Tino Villatoro to 2018 Council Vice President under the new executive structure.
- Appointed Regulated Members at large Myanh La and Kathleen Thompson to the Legislation Sub-Committee for a three-year term commencing January 1, 2018.
- Approved revisions to CMLTA operational finance policies.
- Approved the new Practice Advisory Statement on Continued Competence and Profession Evolution.
- Adopted Council Meeting Rules of Order as recommended by professional parliamentarian.

NOMINATIONS

Council is currently accepting expressions of interest for the following vacant positions:

- 2019 - 2021 Councilor (3 vacancies)
- 2018 - 2020 Legislation Sub-Committee Member (3 vacancies)
- 2019 - 2021 Legislation Sub-Committee Member (3 vacancies)

If you are interested, please contact Lori Kmet at registrar@cmlta.org.

2019 DUES NOTICE

September 15-October 31, 2018: \$450 (early bird discount)

November 1-30, 2018: \$500 (regular dues)

December 1-31, 2018: \$625 (regular dues plus processing fees)

NOTE: Since 2013, annual MLT dues have been reduced from \$610 to \$500.

REGISTRAR'S REVIEW

Continued Competence and Profession Evolution - New Practice Advisory Statement

The MLT profession continues to evolve each year due

to advancements in techniques, technologies, and methodologies. The graduates of today receive formal didactic and clinical instruction on recent advancements in laboratory medicine. However, the MLT graduate of several years past must demonstrate the personal drive to further their education and professional development to remain competent in the workplace with the ever-expanding scope of an MLT. In addition to annual competency assessments, an employer must provide on the job training when new instrumentation and standard operating procedures are introduced in the workplace.

In June 2017, the CSMLS introduced the certification examination for Diagnostic Cytology (DC) based on the new DC national competency profile. This new competency profile reflected the expanded skill set of the DC MLT to now include the same didactic and clinical instruction for histology as that of the General MLT. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) DC MLT graduates prior to June 2017 received the identical didactic training of those in the General MLT program with the only differences being DC graduates did not receive formal clinical instruction in histology nor were they assessed at the national level in this discipline.

The CSMLS regularly updates the national competency profiles based on industry standards, as evidenced by the new General MLT competency profile scheduled for release in 2019. With this in mind, it is prudent CMLTA Regulated Members ensure they maintain competence in the workplace and have the appropriate professional liability insurance (PLI) in the event there ever is a complaint of unprofessional conduct against them. If a Regulated Member is working in a capacity outside of their formal training and education which is reflected in the year they successfully challenged the CSMLS certification examination, an individual should obtain [extended PLI from the CSMLS](#). This benefits both the Regulated Member and the employer as laboratory and hospital accreditation requirements include evidence of appropriately trained personnel and ongoing competency assessment in the workplace. A Regulated Member working in an area outside of their original CSMLS certification and corresponding competency profile presents risks and liabilities for both the individual and the employer.

To learn more, please view the CMLTA [Practice](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM CMLTA COUNCIL

Council is pleased to announce Tarek Brahim, Kathleen Thompson, and Tino Villatoro as new councilors appointed for the 2018-2020 term. [Click here for biographies.](#)

CCP CONVERSATIONS

Alberta College of Medical Diagnostic & Therapeutic Technologists (ACMDTT) CCP Compliance

Since 2015, as mandated by the Competence Committee, the ACMDTT has been supporting the online "My CCP" platform for the Continuing Competence Program (CCP).

At least 13 pieces of correspondence between 2014 and 2016 demonstrated the College's attempts to inform members not only of the conversion to the online process, but also the changes in the CCP from being competency profile based, to aligning with the Standards of Practice for the professions.

In 2017, we utilized the tools available to us and assessed compliance of members to the following:

- The declarations made at renewal regarding compliance with their CCP obligations for the previous year.
- The actual compliance with the online system of My CCP by the membership.

From the entire membership, only five members were directed into Hearings because their declarations of compliance were not true, and they had not completed their 2015/16 CCP obligations. Despite multiple attempts at remediation over an extended period, they did not engage professionally with the ACMDTT to resolve these issues.

Redacted copies (click [link](#)) of the decisions of the Hearings Tribunal, with the orders made for three of the Hearings that have already been completed.

In all three Hearings, the Hearings Tribunal made findings of unprofessional conduct on all of the

allegations presented by the ACMDTT.

The orders include all or some of the following penalties:

- A period of suspension of between 10-14 days.
- Full costs of the Hearing to a maximum of between \$10,000-\$15,000.
- Mandatory CCP audit to be directed for the next two cycles.
- Mandatory completion of the Regulation Education Module.
- An essay reflecting on the responsibilities of a regulated member of the ACMDTT including:
 - Compliance with the Continuing Competence program.
 - Being candid, forthright and honest in all dealings with the ACMDTT and its staff.
 - Cooperating with investigations conducted under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) and responding to correspondence received from the ACMDTT in a timely manner.

Once again we advise members that compliance with CCP is legally mandated, and as evidenced by these findings of unprofessional conduct, this is enforceable.

The ACMDTT will always endeavor to support members in understanding their regulatory obligations, but once again, we remind you that it is your responsibility as a regulated professional to know what your regulatory responsibilities are.

-Reprinted with permission from the ACMDTT

CCP COMPLIANCE AUDIT NOTICE

CCP Compliance Audit notices were emailed and mailed January 16, 2018. Please ensure your contact information with the CMLTA is up to date.

PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT CONSIDERATIONS

REGULATORS CANNOT EASILY RESOLVE PERSONAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN COLLEAGUES

*By Julia Maciura
Steineke Maciura LeBlanc Barristers & Solicitors*

Dr. Al-Ghamdi, a physician, had difficulties with some of the nurses with whom he worked. He made complaints against four of them to their regulatory body, the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA). The Court summarized the concerns as follows:

Dr. Al-Ghamdi's affidavit affirms that he complained to CARNA about the actions of two nurses. In the affidavit, he alleges that one of these nurses acted outside her scope of practice, blackmailed him "by informing that [he] had reported her to CARNA, and that her staff created a hostile workplace for him." He accuses a second nurse of blocking his patient from access to surgery, of being evasive and abusive, of being a difficult person and a friend of the first nurse he had reported to CARNA. He further alleges that this nurse hid equipment so that there was a delay in his patient's surgery. He then alleges that these two nurses accused him of falsely threatening the second nurse, and then used their connections and authority to influence other staff to write a petition saying they would not work with him. Dr. Al-Ghamdi's affidavit then names a third nurse, a close friend of the first nurse and "a notorious person," as the person who was behind the petition. He then accuses a fourth nurse of telling the mother of a child patient that the child's surgery would not happen unless she changed surgeons.

The complaints were all investigated and dismissed. Dr. Al-Ghamdi sought judicial review on numerous grounds related to procedure. In *Al-Ghamdi v College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta*, 2017 ABQB 685, the Court dismissed all of his concerns. It found that the regulator did not have to interview all of the witnesses proposed by a complainant. It also was puzzled by Dr. Al-Ghamdi's assertions that the regulator should not rely on information provided by third parties. The Court did not accept that complainants have a right to access the complete investigator's report of the investigation. It also rejected bald allegations of bias against College staff. The Court went on to accept the regulator's request that Dr. Al-Ghamdi be declared a vexatious litigant. The decision also dealt with a number of additional claims against other parties as well.

<http://www.sml-law.com/blog-regulation-pro/>

CSMLS - A QUESTION OF ETHICS

The CSMLS has been dedicated to providing medical laboratory professionals with the resources and tools needed to provide high quality work within the laboratory. By listening to our members, we heard your need for guidance when dealing with ethical issues at work. We know that ethical dilemmas cause workplace stress and can affect one's mental wellness. Mental wellness has become a hot button topic in the past few years, but it has been around for many more. We've learned that on any given week, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness. This time results in approximately \$51 billion that is lost each year to the Canadian economy because of mental illness.

The question of dealing with ethical dilemmas reaches out beyond the lab, and we wanted to help. We asked ourselves "How can we contribute to deterring this burden and improve the mental wellness of our members in the workplace?"

The CSMLS decided to start investigating ways to tackle the issue of ethics and provide our members a tangible resource to guide them. In 2014 we convened an Ethics Working Group consisting of experts to review relevant literature and complete a needs assessment. The group determined that a Code of Ethics (COE), along with supportive documents would be valuable for members, and so started the ground work for the methodology and construction of a COE package. This proposal was approved by the Board.

As part of this development, we wanted to be sure we kept our members' needs in mind. At LABCON2014 we hosted an Ethics Think Tank, a place for members to discuss issues and concerns around ethics and work together for possible solutions. We took note of these conversations and with them, and other data gathered, we had valuable insights into our stakeholders' opinions on ethics and what a Code of Ethics should include.

The Ethics Working Group began the first level of beginning to create a Code of Ethics. Along with the Code, we wanted to ensure users have significant support and so the recommendation was made for the availability of ethics education for members. At

LABCON2015 we took the opportunity to present all our research and developments to the CSMLS membership, showing the work that was put forward for this initiative thus far.

Where are we now?

The CSMLS Board of Directors is pleased to have approved this timely and valuable resource for not just CSMLS members, but for the entire medical laboratory community. The CSMLS has released an updated Ethics Course, which is available online through The Learning Centre on the CSMLS website. We are soon to release the Code of Ethics, which will be available on our website.

The CSMLS is thankful to everyone who participated in the initial research and development of these resources, including those that filled out surveys, participated in the Think Tank or in the Working Group, and gave of your time and expertise to make the Code of Ethics a reality.

Visit ethics.csmls.org for additional information on the CSMLS Code of Ethics, the Guidance Document or “*The Science of Morals: Understanding the CSMLS Code of Ethics*” course to further your comprehension of the Code and how to apply these principles in real-life situations.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

The CMLTA recognizes the following recipient of the Student Endowment Award:

- Brooklin Folkard, SAIT MLT Program

The Student Endowment Fund has been established to financially assist students with their education in the medical laboratory field. The CMLTA supports an endowment fund at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, the Southern Institute of Technology, and the University of Alberta. The interest from these invested endowment funds are administered by each of the institutions respectively.

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

Don't work for recognition, but do work worthy of recognition. - H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

The foundation for the Recognition Program is based on the vision, mission, core values, and regulatory role of the CMLTA. It is peer to peer recognition of Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) who epitomize professional practice; who advance the profession; and who demonstrate to others the CMLTA's *Standards of Practice* and *Code of Ethics*.

To view the Recognition of Excellence parameters or to nominate a deserving MLT, please click [here](#).

The CMLTA welcomes all feedback and encourages Regulated Members to provide recommendations for continuous improvements to the mandated programs and services offered by the CMLTA. Regulated Member feedback is important to the CMLTA Council and any opportunity to implement your suggestions is mutually beneficial for all parties. Please send your comments/feedback to info@cmlta.org.

The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Alberta (CMLTA) is a recognized leader in the regulation and governance of medical laboratory services. As a trusted partner in healthcare regulation, the CMLTA acknowledges self-regulation is a privilege and endeavors to enhance public protection and patient safety, promote high standards for professional practice, and contribute to the overall wellness of Albertans. The CMLTA protects the public by regulating Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) and fostering excellence in professional practice.

The Commentator e-newsletter is the CMLTA's primary communication vehicle and is distributed February, May, and October. It provides MLTs and the public with current and timely information about CMLTA programs, services, and topics relevant to MLTs and which may have an impact on the healthcare continuum.

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