

# THE COMMENTATOR



Volume 4, Issue 1 - February 2015

---

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

College Council convened on Saturday, November 15, 2014 for a regularly scheduled Council meeting. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Directed the Legislation Sub-Committee to revise ED/R Linkage Policies to incorporate Human Resource Consultant recommendations.
- Approved the College meeting schedule for 2015.
- Approved the 2015 – 2017 budget (2016 registration and MLT Practice Permit dues reduced from \$610 to \$570).
- Approved the 2014 Annual General Meeting (AGM) minutes for presentation to Members at the 2015 AGM.
- Approved the appointment of Myanh La and Lisa Denesiuk to three-year terms on the Legislation Sub-Committee.
- Approved a newly created Member Recognition Program Policy.
- Approved the 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan.
- Approved archival of voluntary memberships effective 2016 (in light of a regulatory-only direction and legal jurisdiction over MLTs only).
- Directed the Legislation Sub-Committee to revise the CMLTA Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and Continuing Competence Program.
- Conducted the annual performance review of the ED/R.

---

## QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

### Member Question:

**There are many Continuing Competence Programs (CCPs) among regulated health professions, so why can't the College adopt another format in which learning activities can be documented retrospectively? Why do**

### IN THIS ISSUE

- [Meeting Highlights](#)
- [Questions to Council](#)
- [Executive Director's Exchange](#)
- [2016 Dues Notice](#)
- [Competence and Professional Development Dialogue](#)
- [CSMLS Competency Profile Review Process](#)
- [Award Recipients](#)

### NOMINATIONS

[click here for details](#)

## **regulated Members have to develop a Learning Plan and identify future learning activities and not simply document learning activities after-the-fact?**

There are 29 regulated health professions and each one has a CCP endorsed by their respective College Councils and the Alberta government. The format and requirements of each College's CCP varies and as Colleges came under the HPA over the last 13 years, the trends and best practices in adult education and continued learning are reflected in the differing models. As per the *Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulation*, the College model requires regulated Members to develop a Learning Plan in advance of the registration year and identify specific learning elements and how they will be achieved. Although some Members may view this approach as flawed, College Council and current literature support a proactive approach to adult learning.

Members are reminded of the old adage "be careful what you wish for" when MLTs request that the College change its prospective approach to learning and professional development. The *Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Profession Regulation CCP* requires practitioners to engage in formal continuing professional development, such as programs or courses for which credits must be earned and to document learning activities in a specific format. This translates into practitioners paying significant dollars for mandatory professional development, such as formal courses and conferences to acquire the necessary credits, and using vacation time or unpaid leave to complete or attend such activities. The College has never required MLTs to incur financial hardship to meet the requirements of the CCP and honors learning activities which are of no financial consequence to regulated Members. The Alberta College of Pharmacists CCP also entails competence assessment (e.g. examinations, evaluations, interviews) and practice visits.

When a pharmacist was asked how he feels about his College's CCP his response was "In a nutshell, there are privileges and burdens of being a regulated healthcare professional".

---

## **NOMINATIONS**

Council is currently accepting nomination forms for the following positions:

- 2016 - 2018 President Elect
- 2016 - 2018 Councilor (Two positions available)

If you are interested, please submit a nomination form available on the College [website](#).

The deadline is May 31, 2015.

---

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S EXCHANGE

I like to think a new year always brings the promise of something fresh, something better, or perhaps just something different. With this in mind, College Council has reviewed the current CCP, including the MLT Competency Profile, and directed its Legislation Sub-Committee to develop something new and improve upon the current model while still maintaining alignment with the current legislative parameters.

The specific structure and guidelines for the CCP are found in both the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) and the *Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulation*. Section 50(2)(a) of the HPA states that a Council must establish a CCP for regulated Members to maintain competence and to enhance the provision of professional services. Furthermore, section 12.2 of the *Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulation* specifically sets out the annual requirements of the CCP including: a self-assessment based on the competency profile developed by the College indicating the areas where continuing competence activities are to be undertaken by a regulated Member in the next registration year; a written Learning Plan that sets out the continuing competence goals of the regulated Member for the next registration year and the continuing competence activities to be undertaken by the regulated Member during that year to achieve the continuing competence goals; and a completed Learning Plan from the previous registration year documenting the competence activities that were completed. Section 12.3 includes a provision for periodically selecting regulated Members for a review and evaluation of all or part of a regulated Member's continuing competence, and as such the CMLTA developed the annual Compliance Audit.

Over the years, Members have expressed to College

Council their discord with the current format of the CCP, specifically its proactive approach and the commitment to specific learning elements. Of course College Council could propose an entirely new CCP with a different structure, format, and mandatory requirements for regulated Members. This would necessitate a thorough review and endorsement from the multiple levels of government and ultimately the Minister of Health signing off on a new draft of the *Medical Laboratory Technologists Profession Regulations*. This process could take several years or the government may not even entertain a submission for drastic changes to the CMLTA's CCP and direct the College to operate within the confines of the current program. In any event, the first step for the College in this situation would be for Council to truly view the current CCP as a model that is not considered leading practice, not a means to foster professional development in practitioners, and not in the best interests of public protection and patient safety.

Many MLTs each year request that the College change its proactive approach to learning with the commitment to future educational activities to a retrospective approach without the advance promise of completing specific learning activities followed by an after-the-fact reporting system. A review of literature on the topic of adult learning in the United States and the United Kingdom supports the College's current CCP model with a self-assessment followed by a proactive and self-directed approach to continued education. College Council sees the value in the current format; therefore, the prospective approach and commitment to identified future learning activities will remain a component of the CCP.

The College has previously published three versions of the CCP Competency Profile containing 22 discrete Bands or areas of competence, beginning with the original version in 2006, followed by updated and enhanced versions in 2009 and 2012 (addition of biochemical genetics and management competencies). The Competency Profile is used by MLTs to perform an annual self-assessment and determine which competencies an individual performs competently, those competencies performed at an advanced level, those competencies that need to be developed, or those competencies that an individual has a desire to learn more about. It is a continual

game of “cat and mouse” with the current format for the Competency Profile and self-assessment. The College collates feedback from employers and Members to include in a new version of the Profile, and within weeks the College receives feedback indicating the document does not reflect specific competencies of emerging techniques, technologies, and methodologies. It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a Competency Profile that is an exhaustive listing of every possible MLT competency and is reflective of emerging techniques, technologies, and methodologies in various MLT workplaces in a timely manner.

The legislative drafters of the HPA abandoned the mindset of “turf protection” when the former *Health Disciplines Act* was retired. The HPA philosophy is based on all health professionals working beyond their formal education/training and expanding the boundaries of their skills, knowledge, judgments, and abilities to attain higher level competencies through training and advanced education. In its pursuit to create the “perfect” Competency Profile with enduring applicability and endless scope, the College looked to a foundational doctrine for MLTs...the College Standards of Practice (SOP). The SOP represent the minimum standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all MLTs registered in Alberta and complement the College Code of Ethics, which together, establish the framework to guide the practice of medical laboratory science. The SOP are mandatory and apply to regulated Members at all times in all dimensions of professional practice, including technical and nontechnical fields such as education, administration, quality assurance, and research. They are designed to reflect both public and professional interests, and as such, may be referenced in complaint resolution and professional discipline hearing proceedings. The SOP were developed to define performance expectations for the delivery of quality services by MLTs, to provide guidance for MLTs and others in evaluating and maintaining competence, and to provide a reference to the public and others regarding the professional standards to which MLTs are accountable.

Over the course of this year, the College will begin work to draft a new CCP Competency Profile based on the College SOP to be presented to government and ultimately MLTs.

---

## 2016 DUES NOTICE

Members will be pleased to hear College Council approved \$570 for annual registration and MLT Practice Permit dues for 2016 which is a reduction of \$40. As many recall, the College experienced a \$168,000 deficit in 2008 due to increased operating costs and stagnate dues for several years. In 2009, Council was forced to protect the financial position of the College and dues were significantly increased to cover the mandatory programs and services of the College. Over the last six years Council has dedicated projected surplus revenue into operational reserves and a conduct contingency fund to offset unanticipated costs. College reserves are currently valued at \$1,050,000 without the addition of 2014 surplus funds or the projected additional revenue for 2015. When surplus funds are allocated to these restricted reserve funds in 2016 (after the 2015 financial audit), the College will have approximately one full year of operating funds in reserve. This puts the College in a financially secure position, minimizes risk for the organization, and aligns with auditor's recommendation. As the College is a not-for-profit entity, it is prudent to cease building reserve funds once the desired level is attained.

**September 15-October 31: \$520**

**November 1-30: \$570**

**December 1-31: \$695**

---

## COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

With the increased awareness and utilization of the online Continuing Competence Program (CCP) Activity Log this renewal season, the College recognized the diminished purpose of recording Learning Outcomes on a completed Learning Plan. Often Members input all the data required for the CCP Activity Log into their Learning Outcome only to find out they must "re-enter" all the data into their online CCP Activity Log.

**New:** Effective with 2015 completed Learning Plans, Members will only be required to indicate whether Learning Objectives have been met (minimum of three) or have not been met. Members are reminded

to record details of learning activities undertaken to complete learning objectives on a [CCP Activity Log](#). A CCP Activity Log will still be requested when randomly selected for a [CCP Compliance Audit](#).

---

### **CCP COMPLIANCE AUDIT NOTICE**

CCP Compliance Audit notices will be emailed the second week in February. Please ensure your contact information with the College is up to date.

---

### **CSMLS COMPETENCY PROFILE REVIEW PROCESS**

#### **What We Do and How We Do It!**

The CSMLS reviews and updates the Competency Profiles for each discipline to ensure competencies are appropriate and current; every five years or whenever the discipline experiences a major change in scope of practice. The CSMLS Competency Profiles are accepted nationwide as the backbone of the CSMLS certification exams; thus the entrance to practice Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) and Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLA) in all provinces except Quebec. This whole process is driven by membership and other major stakeholder feedback and serves as the scope of practice for MLTs and MLAs nationwide.

The competency profile review process is designed to take approximately 12-18 months. This is to ensure adequate input and validation of the new standard from all parties involved. The most important input is from the membership and stakeholders. Once a new competency profile has been accepted by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), the process begins with another discipline.

A facilitator is appointed and the Task Force is selected and appointed by the Professional Standards Council (PSC)\*. The exam panel chair for the specific discipline is also appointed on the Task Force by the PSC. A survey is sent to all members and stakeholders requesting feedback on changes, additions, and/or enhancements to the existing Competency Profile to better reflect the scope of

practice for the immediate future.

The facilitator reviews and collates the feedback from the survey in preparation for the Task Force's live meeting. At the live meeting, the Task Force develops a draft of the proposed competency profile and presents it to the membership and stakeholders for validation in the form of a survey. Feedback from the validation survey is reviewed by the Task Force and appropriate edits are completed by teleconference.

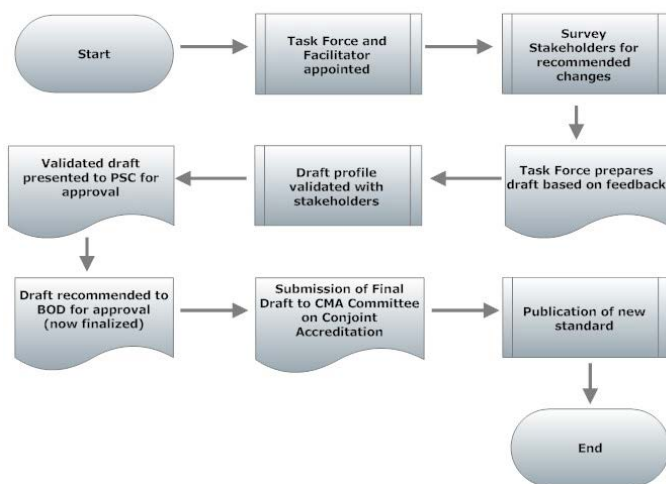
If the document is validated, it is then presented to the PSC for approval. Upon PSC approval, the draft is forwarded and recommended to the CSMLS Board of Directors for consideration. Once reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, the new Competency Profile is presented to the Committee on Conjoint Accreditation (CCA) of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). Once the CCA accepts the draft, the newly developed competency profile is published on the CSMLS and CMA website and is adopted. The implementation date is negotiated between the CSMLS, CMA, and CMA accredited programs.

The power in shaping the scope of practice for the profession of Medical Laboratory Technology and Medical Laboratory Assistants rests solely on this process. The involvement of all MLTs and MLAs in this process is essential and is not discipline specific. We encourage you to provide feedback for Competency Profiles of all disciplines, not just on that of your own certification.

*\*Note: Professional Standards Council is the former Council on National Certification and National Regulatory Council. Each regulatory body has representation, and where no regulation exists, a provincial association is present.*



### CSMLS Competency Profile Review Process



---

### AWARD RECIPIENTS

The College recognizes the following recipients of the College Student Endowment Awards:

- Alicia Power, UofA MLS program

*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.*

You are receiving this email as you are affiliated with the CMLTA.  
Copyright © 2015 College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Alberta. All rights reserved.

**All regulated Members are responsible for receiving *The Commentator* and being aware of its contents.**

**Our mailing address is:**  
College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Alberta  
301-9426 51 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T6E 5A6  
Canada

[Add us to your address book](#)