

January 2015

INTRODUCTION:

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) appreciates the opportunity to provide its perspective on Bill 36 – Health and Social Services Professions Act. This submission focuses on the aspects of the Act that relate to medical laboratory professionals.

CSMLS is the national certifying body for medical laboratory technologists and medical laboratory assistants, and the national professional society for Canada's medical laboratory professionals. We are a not-for-profit organization that is funded entirely by membership dues and revenues from goods and services. We do not receive operational funding from governments or other organizations.

Our members practice in hospital laboratories, private medical laboratories, public health laboratories, government laboratories, research and educational institutions. Incorporated in 1937 as the Canadian Society of Laboratory Technologists, the society has over 14,500 members in Canada and in countries around the world.

Our purpose is:

1. To promote and maintain a nationally accepted standard of medical laboratory technology by which other health professionals and the public are assured of effective and economical laboratory services, and
2. To promote, maintain and protect the professional identity and interests of the medical laboratory technologist and of the profession.

One of the major functions of CSMLS is to set qualification standards in medical laboratory science. We conduct exams across Canada and issue certificates to candidates who meet the prescribed standard. CSMLS provides prior learning assessment to internationally educated medical laboratory technologists who are seeking Canadian Certification. The PLA process evaluates an applicant's academic credentials, language proficiency, clinical training and work experience and their level of competency to write the Certification examination.

Once members are certified, CSMLS provides professional development and continuing education programs to help members update their skills and knowledge, maintain technical competence and

achieve their professional goals. Our continuing education service provides distance education programs in technical and scientific subjects and laboratory management.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

The CSMLS would like to congratulate the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Social Programs on moving forward with the regulation of health professionals. The CSMLS has long been a proponent of regulation within our profession as we feel it is a key element of patient safety. Furthermore, we recognize that umbrella style legislation has been effective in other jurisdictions, particularly in jurisdictions where the population sizes of the professions being regulated are smaller.

We would like to specifically commend the inclusion of the Public Health Emergency provision (21), which we see as a great, proactive public safety defence measure. We also applaud the Alternative Dispute Resolution provision (30) as being very forward thinking.

As the national certification body and professional association for Canada's laboratory professionals, we would support the inclusion of our professionals under this umbrella legislation. The CSMLS has two position statements which endorse the regulation of medical laboratory technologists (MLTs) and medical laboratory assistants (MLAs) respectively. You can find these position statements online at <http://csmls.org/About-Us/Position-Statement-overview.aspx> and appended to this document.

The committee is likely aware of the lab error incident in Newfoundland and Labrador and the subsequent inquiry. The Honourable Margaret A. Cameron in her 2009 Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Hormone Receptor Testing specifically discussed regulation and licensure as a necessary piece of the patient safety system. In her report, Justice Cameron states, "It is essential that technologists, like pathologists, maintain and improve their knowledge and skills once the formal training is completed.... Licensing would provide the benefit of setting professional standards and creating greater opportunities for continuing education for technologists."¹ Thus, in the interest of public safety, we strongly recommend the inclusion of laboratory professionals in this legislation.

Detailed Comments/Questions:

2. (2) (c) Contents of application

Can there be clarity around the fee to accompany an application?

7.(3) Prohibited employment or engagement

There are multiple professions that exist which provide various aspects or degrees of laboratory services, the primary two being medical laboratory technologists (MLTs) and medical laboratory assistants (MLAs). To fulfill this stipulation of the Act, we strongly encourage both groups be included under the Act along with all other medical laboratory personnel.

1. *Cameron M (hon). Commission of Inquiry on Hormone Receptor Testing. St. John's (NL): Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; 2009. 154 p. Volume 1*

51.(4) Nomination by professional association

There is no current professional association operating in the Northwest Territories for laboratory professionals. Due to the relatively small size of the laboratory professional population, it is likely not feasible for a professional association to be able to sustainably operate. Could a national professional association, such as the CSMLS, suffice and serve this role?

Position Statement

Support for Regulation: Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLAs)

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) endorses the regulation of medical laboratory assistants (MLAs) in all jurisdictions across Canada. Regulation defines the practice of medical laboratory science, establishes the requirements and qualifications necessary to practice in the medical laboratory profession, and describes the boundaries within which the profession operates, as a key element of patient safety.

The CSMLS supports employing MLAs in the medical workplace providing that the MLA:

- has relevant education and/or experience, and
- is certified with the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, and
- is performing within his or her scope of practice and/or level of professional certification, and
- adheres to the CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct, and
- is accountable for his or her professional acts.

Implicit in these responsibilities is the need to maintain knowledge and skills at the appropriate level.

The purpose of professional regulation is to serve and protect the public. Regulation ensures that competent, qualified, registered medical laboratory assistants provide Canadians with safe and ethical laboratory testing.

Note: The CSMLS acknowledges the diversity of job titles for MLAs in Canada, and has selected this term as it relates to the National Competency Profile. Reference to the title MLA includes, but is not limited to: medical laboratory assistant, clinical laboratory assistant, medical laboratory technician, MLA/T (medical laboratory assistant/technician), medical laboratory aide, laboratory helper and phlebotomist.

References:

1. Ernst EJ. Applied Phlebotomy. Baltimore: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: 2005.
2. World Health Organization. WHO guidelines on drawing blood: best practices in phlebotomy. Geneva, Switzerland : WHO Press; 2010. 125 p.

Position Statement

Support for Regulation: Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs)

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) endorses the regulation of medical laboratory technologists (MLTs) in all jurisdictions across Canada. Regulation defines the practice of medical laboratory science, establishes the requirements and qualifications necessary to practice in the medical laboratory profession, and describes the boundaries within which the profession operates, as a key element of patient safety.

The CSMLS supports employing MLTs in the medical workplace providing that the MLT:

- has relevant education and/or experience, and
- is certified with the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science, and
- is performing within his or her scope of practice and/or level of professional certification, and
- meets the requirements for licensure in his/her jurisdiction
- adheres to the CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct, and
- is accountable for his or her professional acts.

Implicit in these responsibilities is the need to maintain the knowledge, skills and judgement commensurate with the appropriate professional level. It is mandatory for regulated MLTs to meet identified competency requirements and to undergo continued competency training.

The purpose of professional regulation is to serve and protect the public. Regulation ensures that competent, qualified, registered medical laboratory technologists provide Canadians with safe and ethical laboratory testing.

Note: The CSMLS acknowledges the diversity of job titles for MLTs in Canada, and has selected this term as it relates to the National Competency Profile. Reference to the title MLT includes, but is not limited to: medical laboratory technologist, registered technologist .