



## The Regulation of Sonography

All diagnostic medical sonographers (DMS) practising in Ontario—or individuals currently participating in an education program for diagnostic medical sonography or preparing for an exam in the profession—will soon be required to register with the College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario (CMRTO).

In late August the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care announced that it had received direction to regulate diagnostic medical sonographers under the CMRTO, and that the registration process is to begin by January 2018. By January 2019 all individuals practising as a diagnostic medical sonographer will be required to be registered as a member of the CMRTO in order to be authorized to practise diagnostic medical sonography in Ontario.

The announcement of self-regulation of diagnostic medical sonographers— supported by the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences (OAMRS) and the CMRTO—reflects not only the professional standards that have been achieved by sonographers in their practice, and many years of work by sonographers, the OAMRS and the CMRTO to bring it about, but also the need to ensure the Ontario public continues to receive safe and competent care.

By being self-regulated under the CMRTO, sonographers will join not only their medical radiation technologist colleagues, but also other healthcare professions registered in the province's 26 regulated colleges, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and physiotherapy. The benefits of self-regulation include recognition of the education and training sonographers have undergone to practice as professionals, authorized use of a title [MRT(DMS) or DMS], and assurance that the profession's standards are enforced and the public protected.

As a first critical step, the CMRTO has already drafted, and begun circulating to members and stakeholders for comment, proposed changes to the registration regulation. These changes can be viewed on the CMRTO's website at <https://www.cmrto.org/what-we-do/consultations/>. The deadline for receiving comments on the proposed changes is October 17, 2017.

## Grandparenting

It is especially important that all sonographers appreciate there will only be a one-year grandparenting period starting in January 2018, as mandated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, after which only sonographers registered with the CMRTO will be authorized to practise diagnostic medical sonography in Ontario.

The one-year grandparenting period permits individuals who have been working competently in diagnostic medical sonography currently, or within the last three years, to apply for registration as a DMS, whether or not they have completed an educational program or passed an approved examination (although satisfactory evidence of competence in diagnostic medical sonography will still have to be provided before registration is accepted). This ensures competent diagnostic medical sonography practitioners are given an opportunity to register without fear of losing their job as a result of new registration requirements.

The experience of other colleges in the registration of a new category of professionals is that unfortunately too many practitioners believe they need do nothing given their previous education or practice experience. However, anyone applying to register after the grandparenting period must meet all the new registration requirements as outlined in the proposed changes. These requirements will include demonstrating having successfully completed an approved program in diagnostic medical sonography and examinations approved by CMRTO's Council, and providing evidence of having engaged in clinical practice within the previous five years (or completing the approved program).

## Ongoing Communications

Needless to say, there is much to be done to achieve the goal to begin registering sonographers in January 2018. And diagnostic medical sonographers, members of other professions and CMRTO's own current members (which include professionals practising in radiography, nuclear medicine, radiation therapy, and magnetic resonance) will have many questions about this exciting and complex undertaking.

The CMRTO will be answering these questions and communicating to stakeholders as important milestones are reached through regular 'Updates', announcements in a special section of its website ([www.cmрто.org](http://www.cmрто.org)) and by other print and visual materials as needed.

