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NBSMLT Position Statement on Phlebotomy Services

The New Brunswick Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists (NBSMLT) is the regulatory body for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) in New Brunswick with a primary role in protection of the public with regard to medical laboratory services.

Currently, regulated NBSMLT Medical Laboratory Technologists and Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) Certified Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLAs) are authorized to perform phlebotomy services. Although the NBSMLT does not regulate Medical Laboratory Assistants, we recognize that they are skilled members who form part of high-quality health care teams and play a significant role in quality patient care.

The NBSMLT supports the assertion by the CSMLS that *“national certification must be the entry-level qualification for Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLAs) in Canada; the CSMLS competency profiles equip Medical Laboratory Assistants with the required skills and knowledge to provide high quality medical laboratory services and to function as members of multi-disciplinary health care teams, thereby enhancing the quality of patient care for all Canadians.”*

Certification and regulation of Medical Laboratory Professionals provides both MLAs and MLTs with a Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Conduct, Standards of Practice and national Competency profiles, which include areas in Safe Work Practices, Data and Specimen Collection and Handling, Pre-analytical Procedures, Reagent Preparation, Quality Management, Professional Practice, and Critical Thinking.

The NBSMLT supports the regulation of Medical Laboratory Assistants, as regulation provides assurance to the public that MLAs meet a standard entry to practice competency through relevant education, training and certification as well as continuing competency development. The CSMLS also supports the regulation of Medical Laboratory Assistants. *“The purpose of professional regulation is to provide public assurance and protection. Regulation ensures that competent, qualified, registered medical laboratory assistants facilitate the provision of safe and ethical laboratory testing in Canada” (CSMLS, 2017).*

Regulation provides oversight of practice standards and allows for a process for allegations of unprofessional or incompetent practice to be investigated and addressed, which is integral in protecting public safety.

Although phlebotomy is not a restricted act, it does fall within the Scope of Practice of both MLTs and MLAs, and as such, it is our position that medical laboratory professionals, regulated, certified, or otherwise, must be held to the same standards for patient care and oversight. A training program in phlebotomy alone may alleviate some of the immediate burden of insufficient health human resources limited to the practice of phlebotomy. It should not be part of a long-term solution, which needs to be focused on regulation of MLAs as well as addressing availability in clinical placements and recruitment strategies for rural areas.