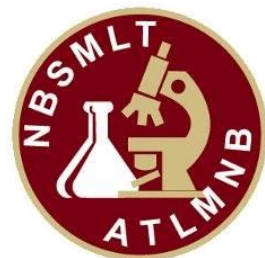


New Brunswick Society of Medical Laboratory Technology

Excellence in Regulation & Governance Strategic Plan for the NBSMLT 2025-2028



Introduction

Background

The New Brunswick Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists (NBSMLT), the regulatory body for Medical Laboratory Technologists in New Brunswick, is constituted under the Act respecting Medical Laboratory Technologists of New Brunswick (1991).

To protect public safety, the NBSMLT licenses individuals who meet the requirements to practice Medical Laboratory Technology and assures that diagnostic laboratory testing in New Brunswick is performed by qualified professionals.

The NBSMLT, with 650 licensed registrants, is governed by an 8-member board of directors. It employs an Executive Director and Registrar who operate from a virtual office on a part-time basis.

MISSION

The NBSMLT protects the public by regulating the profession of medical laboratory science through high standards of practice, education, and collaboration to ensure public protection.

VISION

Grow and expand through collaboration and engagement

Values

In our work, we are open, transparent, and act honestly and with integrity. We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion, so our profession reflects our population. We collaborate with others to safeguard accurate, standardized and safe medical laboratory sampling and testing.

Objectives for strategic planning

To develop this plan, the NBSMLT had the following objectives:

- Develop a framework that focuses on our mandate as a regulatory body;
- Build consensus on values and strategic directions;
- Examine resource constraints;
- Examine priority issues of the profession;
- Articulate achievable priorities for the next 3-5 years.

Process

The NBSMLT engaged the assistance of a facilitator to undergo a review process which included:

- An environmental Scan of the issues of greatest concern to regulators of the Medical Laboratory Profession;
- A survey of NBSMLT members regarding their great concerns as medical laboratory Professionals;
- A two-day workshop with the Board and staff, which included SWOT analysis;
- A draft strategic framework;

- Board feedback on draft strategic framework;
- Final Strategic Plan.

Activities

Environmental Scan

Through meeting with a cross-section of health profession regulators, including members of the New Brunswick Professional Health Regulators Network (NBPHRN), the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR), and the Canadian Alliance of Medical Laboratory Professional Regulators (CAMLPR), several issues have been identified as having a major impact on the future of the Medical Laboratory Technology profession.

- **Human Health Care Resource shortages.** The nation-wide shortage of health practitioners across all sectors of health care has risen to crisis levels. The MLT profession has been identified as one of the critical sectors requiring an influx of qualified professionals. There is incredible stress placed upon regulators to ‘remove barriers’ to registration and create flexible pathways for international candidates to become successfully registered to practice in Canada. We have seen this through government initiatives in increased project funding, international recruitment, the offering of signing and retention bonuses, and increased involvement and oversight of health regulatory processes. There is increased pressure to regulate health professionals that may be from outside of the traditional framework.
- **Increased government oversight/less true ‘self-regulation’.** The resource shortages in healthcare are leading to increased government oversight of health regulation both nationally and provincially. With the Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act of 2022, we are seeing a desire from government to become more involved with regulatory oversight. Other provinces have seen sweeping reform to self-regulation, including the Regulated Health Professions Act, often requiring the mandatory split of regulatory functions from professional advocacy functions, and the creation of umbrella colleges, where several health professions are grouped under one regulatory college.
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI).** The need for regulatory practices to be embedded with principles of EDI. Regulatory Colleges have traditionally been viewed as providing barriers to practice in the profession. With the increased focus on the need to include principles of EDI in the work that we do, regulators need to be responsive to the needs of the public and the profession in regards to EDI principles. The need to have practices and policies that include considerations for further development of equity, diversity and inclusion is becoming an expected requirement.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** The use of AI has become an emerging trend that regulators must consider. The topic is being discussed at all regulatory conferences as an issue that bears serious considerations for future implications within a profession that rapidly-evolves.

Member Survey

The NBSMLT called for members to respond to a simple, open-ended four question survey to identify trends and concerns among the profession. There were 12 respondents. Common themes were identified and summarized.

Question 1

As an MLT what do you see as the biggest opportunity for the profession?

Need for increased scope and definition of scope and the regulation of Medical Laboratory Assistants (MLA)

Considerations for advancing technologies

Increased professional advocacy on behalf of members

Question 2

What do you feel are the biggest threats or challenges for the profession?

Lack of qualified/regulated MLTs, with direct impact on public safety

Increased use of Point of Care Testing (POCT) by non-laboratory staff

Question 3

If you could name only one thing you would like the Society, in its Regulatory role, to accomplish in the next three years, what would it be?

Regulation of MLAs

Assist Internationally-Educated Medical Laboratory Technologists (IEMLT) in becoming registered

Update legislation, drop advocacy

Update website

Question 4

As an MLT, what keeps you up at night?

Lack of qualified staff affecting quality and patient outcomes

Artificial intelligence taking over MLT job functions and impacts on patient outcomes

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged Board and staff• Competent and engaged professionals• Strong national connections to regulatory networks• Stable Financial Management	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change in professional competency establishment, entry-to-practice exam, and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) administration. The national association has administered the entry-to-practice exam and PLA. The National Regulatory Alliance will administer the Flexible Pathways Project. Though the transition has caused uncertainty and anxiety within the profession, the desired outcome is to create a framework that balances a flexible pathway to registration and upholding regulatory standards.• Change in/new government address needed changes• The board desires to be a 'best in class' regulator and to do the training required to govern such an entity• Modernizing communication with the profession
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Act is outdated. It has not been amended since it was enacted in 1991.• NBSMLT is a 'Society' with a dual mandate of public protection and professional advocacy. This is not aligned with the best regulatory practices and the increased trend of government-mandated separation of the two functions. New Brunswick is the only remaining dual-mandated MLT regulator.• Resources—The Board is made up of volunteers from the profession. The registrant base is 650 MLTs who pay annual dues of \$270.• Database limitations• Communication is dated (website, no social media)• Profession does not reflect the NB population	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attrition rates. Programs are producing fewer students, and even fewer are successful on the first exam attempt. Performance rates will also impact program accreditation status.• Out-of-date legislation• Rapidly changing technology and hospital practices, including AI and the rapid increase in POCT implementation

Strategic Directions and Priorities

Strategic Direction #1: Excellence in Regulation and Governance

Strategic Priority #1

Amendments to the Medical Laboratory Technology Act

Activity: Conduct comprehensive consultations with stakeholders and publish a White Paper on legislative reform.

Outcome: Modern legislation that facilitates effective public interest regulation, aligned with national standards.

Indicator: Legislative reform strategy adopted; initial milestones achieved for international and domestic candidate requirements.

Timing: Begin January 2025; CAMLPR alignment by November 2025 (international) and March 2026 (domestic); broader reforms ongoing through 2028.

Strategic Priority #2

Board work is structured around strategic priorities and legislative requirements

Activity: Align Board agendas and committees with strategic priorities and legislative requirements.

Activity: Reinvigoration of committees.

Outcome: A Board focused on advancing strategy and delivering measurable outcomes

Indicator: Annual Board evaluations show increased focus and effectiveness. A clear list of committee members is attained.

Timing: Implement in 2025, with annual evaluations.

Strategic Priority #3

Ongoing training for the Board and Staff

Activity: Deliver regular training and education on roles, EDI principles, and regulatory trends.

Outcome: A Board and staff well-versed in governance principles and equipped to address current and future regulatory challenges with an understanding of EDI principles

Indicator: Annual assessments show improved governance performance and knowledge retention.

Timing: Ongoing 2025-2027.

Strategic Priority #4

Investment in tools to enhance regulation and governance

Activity: Transition Society data to a regulation management database controlled by the Society.

Outcome: An optimized, Society-controlled database with improved operational efficiency.

Indicator: Database migration plan approved and funded; manual inputs reduced.

Timing: Planning phase 2025-2026; implementation 2027-2028.

Strategic Direction #2: Competence

Strategic Priority #5

Licensee competence is enhanced

Activity: Review and enhance the continuing competence requirements for MLTs.

Outcome: A comprehensive Professional Development program tailored to MLT needs and best practices.

Indicators: a new Professional Development program is launched.

Timing: Planning phase 2025-2026; implementation 2027-2028.

Strategic Direction #3: Stakeholder Confidence

Strategic Priority #6

Enhanced communication with stakeholders

Activity: Overhaul/Update the website for accessibility, integrate multi-platform access, and enhance social media presence.

Outcome: The Society has an up-to-date website that is accessible from computers and mobile devices; it is maintained and is tied in with the Society's social media.

Indicators: Increased traffic to website

Timing: 2025 Website overhaul by mid to late 2025; ongoing updates and engagement strategies thereafter.

