

Additional Information – Proposed Regulation of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers

1. What is the purpose of the proposed regulation of sonographers?

- Regulating diagnostic medical sonographers (DMS) with the Saskatchewan Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (SAMRT) would bring all medical radiation and imaging specialties under one regulatory framework to enhance patient protection by establishing entry to practice requirements and continuing oversight of practice.
- If the application to amend *The Medical Radiation Technologists Act, 2006* is approved, the amended name of the college would become the Saskatchewan College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists (SCMRIT) and regulation would include DMS as a fifth specialty.

2. What would be the protected title of regulated sonographers and which categories of sonographers would be included under the protected title?

- The protected title for sonographers will be ‘Diagnostic Medical Sonographer’ or ‘DMS’. The practice of DMS is divided into three main sub-specialties; all of which are included in this application under the protected title of DMS:
 - Generalist sonographers, who image a variety of examinations, including abdominal, pelvic, obstetrical, breast and other soft tissues;
 - Vascular sonographers, who image arteries and veins throughout the body; and
 - Cardiac sonographers or echocardiographers, who image cardiac structures.
- This means, there will be one licence category for DMS as the areas of practice within DMS (general sonography, cardiac sonography or vascular sonography) are considered areas of practice within the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography.

3. Why would the Saskatchewan Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (SAMRT) become the Saskatchewan College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists (SCMRIT)?

- A college is an organization that is delegated the authority to govern the practice of the members of a profession in the public interest, whereas, an association is a member-centric organization that promotes and advocates for the profession and supports the member. A college, in this case, SCMRIT, would be functioning as an umbrella regulatory organization working for all five professional disciplines under its regulatory framework.
- A regulator issues a licence to practice to members registered under that College and members must belong to the college; they may also choose to belong to a local or national association such as the Saskatchewan Association of Medical Diagnostic Sonographers (SADMS).

4. What benefits can sonographers expect if regulated?

- The benefits of self-regulation include recognition of the education and training sonographers have undergone to practice as professionals, authorized use of a title (DMS), and assurance that the profession's standards are enforced and the public protected.
- By being self-regulated under the SAMRT (would be SCMRIT), sonographers will join not only their medical radiation technologist colleagues, but also other healthcare professions registered in the province's 27 regulated colleges, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and physiotherapy.

5. Why not regulate sonographers as independent stand-alone profession?

- Regulating a profession takes a significant amount of regulatory experience and financial resources which can mean that smaller health professions find it difficult to be regulated on a stand-alone basis. Across Canada, the trend for sonographers is to be regulated with MRTs as in Quebec and Ontario; Alberta and Nova Scotia legislation will be proclaimed within the next year. Joining SAMRT will put Saskatchewan DMS on equal footing with other regulated provinces.

6. How can public protection be enhanced by regulation?

- The mandate of the SAMRT is to serve and protect the public by making sure that its members are qualified to practice and are practising professionally. Our goal is to strengthen the safety, quality, oversight and transparency of medical radiation and imaging services by:
 - setting and enforcing standards of practice, ethics, guidelines and policies for the practice and conduct of members;
 - registering only those individuals who have met the educational and examination requirements for competent practice before they can practice or use the professional title;
 - requiring members to maintain continuous education (CE) credits (credits already required by the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) or Sonography Canada are eligible for SAMRT CE);
 - addressing complaints and concerns from the public, patients and employers regarding professional conduct issues through its complaints and discipline process; and
 - providing current information about each member's registration status, specialty, place of practice and past conduct to the public on its website.

7. How would the grandparenting work?

- If sonographers are to be regulated, it is anticipated that there will be a defined period of time that all sonographers can apply to be grandparented into the College.

- The grandparenting period will permit individuals who have been working under credentialing with ARDMS or Sonography Canada in diagnostic medical sonography currently, or worked within a defined prior period of time, to apply for registration as a DMS. This ensures competent DMS practitioners are given an opportunity to register without fear of losing their job as a result of new registration requirements.
- Anyone applying to register after the grandparenting period must meet all the new registration requirements which will be defined and outlined in future proposed bylaw amendments. These requirements may include demonstrating having successfully completed an approved program in diagnostic medical sonography and examinations approved by SAMRT's Council, and providing evidence of having engaged in clinical practice within the previous five years.
- If an applicant has not successfully completed an approved program or equivalent (for example, an internationally educated applicant), the applicant must satisfy the College that their educational program is substantially similar to an approved program and that the applicant is competent to practice diagnostic medical sonography.

8. How can sonographers be informed of the work SADMS and SAMRT are doing on the proposed regulation?

- Needless to say, the application to regulate sonographers with the SAMRT, and the government of Saskatchewan consultation currently underway are preliminary steps. There is much to be done to achieve the goal to begin regulating and registering sonographers.
- DMS, members of other professions and SAMRT'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 SAMRT will be answering these questions and communicating to stakeholders as important milestones occur. **The SADMS and SAMRT do not have access to a list of all sonographers working in Saskatchewan. If you would like to receive updates and have the opportunity to provide input and feedback, we invite you to subscribe to our communication mailing list.** Please fill out the form in Appendix A and return by fax or email to the SAMRT office listed on the form.
- If the proposal is approved, the SAMRT and SADMS will be forming a transition and implementation working group. Sonographers who are not members of either organization will be invited to participate. A call for volunteers will be sent out at a later date.
- There are many areas yet to be developed and more details will come to light as we progress through the process. Some of those activities and milestones will include:
 - Preparing proposed amendments to the regulatory and administrative bylaws.

- Consulting with DMS and MRTs on proposed amendments to the existing Code of Ethics and Standards and Scope of Practice.
- Engagement with sonographers to be represented on Council and Committees.
- Updating the complaints process to ensure that representations of sonographers are added to both government legislated committees: Professional Practice Committee and Discipline Committee.
- Other work to be defined to extend the public protection framework and improve transparency for medical radiation and imaging technology.
- The SAMRT currently regulates four disciplines and we endeavor to be inclusive of all practices, and believe in fairness and respective engagement with all. We look forward to working with sonographers as we work through the phases of regulation.

Questions about regulation can be directed to SAMRT by email at:

debbieschatz@samrt.org or by fax at 306-543-6161.

Your comments/feedback can also be shared by email at: dsakhizai@health.gov.sk.ca, or by mail or fax to:

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Appendix A
Subscribe to receive future regulation of sonography updates

If you would like to continue to receive periodical informational updates about the proposed regulation of sonographers, please complete and return the form to our email address: info@samrt.org or by fax at 306-543-6161.

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Email Address	
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Are you a member of SADMS or SAMRT?	