

The New Brunswick Society of Cardiology Technologists

The New Brunswick Society of Cardiology Technologists (NBSCT) is a non-profit society established to raise the standard of practice, level of competence and quality of patient care in New Brunswick. Each member of the NBSCT is also a member of the Canadian Society of Cardiology Technologists (CSCT). The CSCT is affiliated with the Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) and is accredited by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). The CSCT admits and revokes membership in the Society and mandates that each member maintains professional standards by participating in a mandatory Continuing Education Units (CEU) system.

In June of 2004, with the passing of Bill 54, the NBSCT became a self-regulating body. Bill 54 protects the scope of practice and protects the public from unqualified persons performing the duties of a Cardiology Technologist. (<http://www1.gnb.ca/legis/bill/editform-e.asp?ID=272&legi=55&num=1>)

Cardiology Technologists perform diagnostic tests on the heart. These tests include: electrocardiograms (ECG), exercise tolerance testing (ETT), nuclear exercise tolerance testing (which involves working with Thallium), stress echocardiography testing, holter monitor application and analysis, pacemaker interrogation and programming with physician supervision. Also, the Cardiology Technologist may document and record pacemaker implant threshold measurements under direct supervision of performing surgeon, perform interrogation and programming of implantable cardiac defibrillators (ICD), apply blood pressure monitors and event monitors, and administer medication as directed by physician. Our direct line of authority is from patient to technologist, to physician.

Since the early 1990's, the society has been involved in the quest for recognition of the increasing educational requirements and ever evolving scope of practice.

All Canadian Cardiology Technologist programs offered are designated to fulfill the need for trained technologists in a variety of diagnostic cardiology procedures. Programs are required to be accredited by the Canadian Medical Association (www.cma.ca/conjointaccreditation) and the programs must meet the requirements in the CSCT National Occupational Competency Profile (<http://www.csct.ca/>). Graduates from the approved programs are considered eligible to write the CSCT National Certification Examination. A list of institutions where these programs are available is available at <http://www.csct.ca/education.htm>

Human Resources Development Canada web site (www.hrdc.ca) has placed the Cardiology Technologist in Major Group 32 - Technical & Skilled Occupation in Health; Subgroup 321 - Medical Technologists & Technician (Except Dental Health).

This group includes:

321 Medical Technologists and Technicians (Except Dental Health)

321 Medical Laboratory Technologists and Pathologists' Assistants

3212 Medical Laboratory Technicians

3213 Veterinary and Animal Health Technologists and Technicians

3214 Respiratory Therapists, Clinical Perfusionists and Cardiopulmonary Technologists

3215 Medical Radiation Technologists

3216 Medical Sonographers

3217 **Cardiology Technologists**

3218 Electroencephalographic (EEG) and other Diagnostic Technologists, n.e.c.

3219 Other Medical Technologists and Technicians (Except Dental Health)

Advancing Practice and Increasing responsibilities

There have been many increases in the educational requirements and scope of practice. With the increasing aged population, the demand for pacemaker intervention has skyrocketed. With this increased demand and ever changing priorities, comes an amplified need to keep pace with newer technologies.

In 2012 the Cardiology Technologists were moved from the CUPE bargaining unit to NBU, in order to be placed in a bargaining unit, in which we share a community of interest. On August 17, 2011, we met with the Minister of Human Resources, the Honorable Blaine Higgs. After much discussion the Registered Cardiology Technologists were moved from CUPE to NBU. This move was gazetted on March 7, 2012. At that time only the Registered Cardiology Technologists were moved. Left behind in CUPE were our student members and associate members. A transfer agreement was negotiated and we were placed in Group I of the pay grid Para Medical collective agreement, and Registered Cardiology Technologist Coordinator was placed in Group II of that pay grid. This fracturing of our group has caused the NBSCT many issues. This placement is different from most other disciplines in this collective agreement. The majority of classifications within this collective agreement place students, and those waiting to write their registration examinations, in Group I, and registered technologists in Group 3. We were told during our initial meetings with NBU representatives that “group 1 only has students”. Our society is regularly asked why only the registered technologists were moved and what is being done to bring the rest of our members to NBU.

We would like to see all of the Registered Cardiology Technologists and those eligible to become registered treated like most of the other disciplines within this bargaining unit. Students and registry eligible students in Group 1, and registered technologists in Group 3. This move

would alleviate issues that have plagued human resources since our move.

As noted in the “NB Health Human Resources Supply and Demand Update 2008-2015”

(<http://www.gnb.ca/0051/pub/pdf/2011/Health%20Human%20Resources%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Update%202008-2015.pdf>)

“advancing technology also advances and increases the workload and responsibility of Cardiology Technologists in that they are the professionals monitoring and programming pacemakers and implantable cardiac defibrillators.” Technology around such devices is advancing rapidly, which required the skill set and knowledge of Cardiology Technologists to advance rapidly as well. Consistent training is required to advance skill sets and knowledge base in order to keep pace.

Presently, in the province of New Brunswick, there is a shortage of qualified Cardiology Technologists. “NB Health Human Resources Supply and Demand Update 2008-2015”, projects that this shortage will increase to 20% by 2015. For recruitment and retention purposes, prospective salaries should provide enticement to prospective students and graduates, or the projected void will not be filled.

At present, the pay scale for Cardiology Technologists in Atlantic Canada has the NB Registered Cardiology Technologists as the lowest paid Registered Cardiology Technologists in Atlantic Canada.

Because Cardiology Technologists are equal partners in the delivery of health care in New Brunswick, their contribution is no less than other members of the health care team and, as such, should have a salary that reflects their immense contribution to patient care.