



FAQ about the College for Sonographers and MRTs

1.) What is self-regulation?

This model of regulation assumes members of a profession are best suited to govern their own profession, based on their professional knowledge, skills and judgement. Therefore, it is called self-regulation. Self-regulation includes the formation of a college to govern specific groups of professionals. A college is governed by a board and committees consisting of registrants and public members. The purpose of self-regulation is to:

- a. serve and protect the public interest in the practice of the profession;
- b. preserve the integrity of the profession; and
- c. maintain public confidence in the ability of the profession to regulate itself.

Our College will be the **Nova Scotia College of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals** (NSCMIRTP), and will consist of practitioners of the following 5 disciplines:

- a. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- b. Magnetic Resonance Technologists
- c. Nuclear Medicine Technologists
- d. Radiation Therapists
- e. Radiological Technologists

2.) Why are we being self-regulated?

Sonographers (DMSs) and Medical Radiation Technologists (MRTs) have been asking for the privilege to self-regulate for decades in Nova Scotia and across Canada. Sonographers and MRTs joined forces in 2010 to approach the provincial government to apply for a new Act for MRTs and to expand regulation to include DMSs and Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists (MRI). Not only will self-regulation protect the public, but it'll also allow registrants of a profession (MRTs and DMSs) to do the following:

- a. Determine entry-to-practice eligibility.
- b. Set the standards for the profession.
- c. Identify how to assess competence.
- d. Set standards of conduct, and issues of unprofessional conduct are reviewed by their peers.

3.) What does self-regulation mean for Sonographers and MRTs?

Self-regulation will ensure that those sonographers and MRTs who have met minimum requirements for education and skills and are competent to practice. It'll also have the following benefits:

- a. A protected title (DMS and/or MRT) under the law.
- b. A license to practice, enabling them to practice legally within the province of Nova Scotia and validity that they meet entry-to-practice requirements.
- c. Assurance of the standards of the profession being enforced, and unprofessional conduct being appropriately dealt with by registrants of the profession.
- d. Of knowing that the public interest protected and is assured service from competent, ethical and safe professionals.
- e. Increased recognition of MRTs and DMSs as healthcare professionals by the public and other health professionals

4.) What does self-regulation mean specifically for my practice?

Registration with the College will be mandatory in order to practice in your profession. This means there will be several changes in how to practice in Nova Scotia, some of which are listed below:

- a. Must have a license to practice as a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (DMS), this is already true for Medical Radiation Technologists (MRT) in Nova Scotia
 - License will be issued by the College
- b. Mandatory annual registration fees (required to practice)
- c. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits will have to be earned
 - 30 CPD credits every two years.
- d. Must meet the following criteria to obtain a license to practice:
 - Completed an approved education program in relevant discipline;
 - Successfully completed the recognized entry to practice examination in relevant discipline;
 - Meets good character requirements for licensing;
 - Meets language requirements and be legally entitled to work in Canada
- e. Must obtain Professional Liability Insurance (PLI)
- f. Maintain required currency hours
- g. Conferences will be held for all 5 professional groups of the NSCMIRTP together
 - More interprofessional development.
 - Better patient care and safety.
 - Keep all College registrants informed and up to date.

5.) What does self-regulation mean for the public?

Regulating sonographers and MRTs will enable patients, employers and other members of the public to:

- a. Verify the professional registration status of their healthcare provider.

- b. Expect complaints to be resolved in a fair and transparent manner through the regulatory body.
- c. Expect the regulatory body to manage public concerns about unsafe and unprofessional practice.
- d. Have access to a full registry of all licensed sonographers and MRTs practicing in Nova Scotia.
- e. Be confident that all sonographers and MRTs continue to meet professional development requirements for the profession.
- f. Be confident that all sonographers and MRTs are expected to abide by the College's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

6.) When will we be regulated?

Our journey to self-regulation began in 2010 when the NSAMRT and NSSDMS joined forces to work towards forming the Nova Scotia College of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals (NSCMIRTP). Once this College becomes proclaimed, sonographers and MRTs will be self-regulated. Bill 70 received Royal Assent in May 2013 (making it an Act), which will govern the College once it comes into effect. The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) has recently opened the College's regulations, review of these is hoped to be completed by the end of Aug 2019. It is now expected that the New College will be proclaimed sometime in 2020. As NSAMRT and NSSDMS become aware of more precise timelines these will be shared via e-blasts, townhalls, newsletters and on our website.

7.) How much will it cost to be regulated?

The current annual dues for the Nova Scotia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (NSAMRT) is \$450. This is similar to fees for other regulatory colleges. If proclamation occurs in 2020 as expected there will be no dues increase for MRTs. For sonographers they will begin to pay the annual dues of \$450.

In addition to annual the College dues of \$450 the following required expenses will apply;

- For initial application there is a fee of \$100 (This is a one-time fee)
- PLI insurance is required annually

a. Can we do payroll deductions or pay in any other way?

Yes, payroll deduction will be an option for registrants that are in a permanent full-time or part-time position with NSHA or IWK. There will also be the option to pay with credit card, cheque, and potentially e-transfer.

b. Where do our dues go?

Every self-regulated healthcare profession collects fees from the registrants to meet the costs of regulation. The regulator must be able to perform its regulatory mandate with the fees collected. The NSCMIRTP Board (consisting of elected registrants of the profession and members of the public) oversees the financial performance of the College, including determining fees. The cost of self-regulation will be transparently shared with all registrants of the College through audited financial statements in the College's Annual Report. Like other regulatory Colleges, the NSCMIRTP will be a not-for-profit organization that depends on the registration fees for fulfilling its mandate. If you wish to see an example of costs associated with running a regulatory body, please view NSAMRT's [financial report](#).

8.) What is the difference between a regulator and an association/society?

Below is a chart breaking down some of the difference between an organization whose mandate is regulation (usually called a college) and who's mandate is member services (usually called an association). Sometimes an organization has both mandates, NSAMRT is an example of this. NSAMRT has both the regulatory and member services mandates.

Regulator (College)	National Association/Society
Focuses on public safety	Focuses on professional practice
Compulsory registration	Voluntary membership
Determines the qualification requirements for provincial registry to practice (e.g. credentials, licensing requirements, etc.)	May or may not be involved in qualification requirements for professional designation (e.g. national exam). If involved it is with approval of the regulator.
Must be registered with the regulatory College in order to be employed as a practitioner.	Once a province is regulated, it is not necessary for a College registrant to be a registrant of an association to be employed as a practitioner. In unregulated provinces credentials required to work as a MRT or DMS will be determined by the employer

9.) What will happen to NSAMRT and NSSDMS after the College comes into effect?

NSSDMS and NSAMRT will both cease to exist once the NSCMIRTP is formed. An interim board will form consisting of all members from the NSSDMS and NSAMRT Boards with co-presidents. A new board will be elected within 6 months of NSCMIRTP forming. There will be a planned transition to ensure there is leadership from NSSDMS and NSAMRT on the new board.

10.) I have credentials through CAMRT/Sonography Canada/ARDMS, do I still need to be registered with the college?

All MRTs and sonographers will be required to hold valid registration through the NSCMIRTP to practice in Nova Scotia. The Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT), Sonography Canada (SC) and American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) are national associations. Certification alone with these organizations will no longer be enough to practice sonography in Nova Scotia.

a. Do I need to maintain my membership with CAMRT/Sonography Canada or ARDMS?

No this is a voluntary membership so is not a requirement to practice. However, PLI is required and CAMRT and Sonography Canada are two organizations that provide PLI so maybe the method a registrant chooses to attain their PLI. Membership with one's national association also has many benefits such as participating through a national voice, professional liability insurance and greater continuing education opportunities.

b. Can I do payroll deductions for these associations once the NSCMIRTP is formed?

No, because these memberships are optional to maintain.

11.) How will specialized sonographers and MRTs be affected?

The intent is for all registrants to be licensed in one of five disciplines.

- a. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
- b. Magnetic Resonance Technologists
- c. Nuclear Medicine Technologists
- d. Radiation Therapists
- e. Radiological Technologists

A registered sonographer or MRT may have one or several areas of specialty practice based on their individual credentials. For example, a sonographer is licensed as a DMS, but they are expected to only practice in areas that they are qualified to do so. They can only practice in the area of cardiac sonography if they have passed this exam. Another example would be radiation therapist practising in area of dosimetry, they must have the additional credentials to do so.

12.) What will the transitioning period include?

In the case of sonographers, the College will recognize only Sonography Canada credentials after the transitioning period is over. This means that sonographers who do not have Sonography Canada credentials (CRGS, CRCS or CRVS), will then be required to obtain the appropriate training and credentials. The transitioning period is currently being determined however we know it will

be at least 6 months in duration. During the transitioning period, the College will accept currently practicing sonographers who meet one of the following criteria:

- a. Sonographers who have Sonography Canada credentials and graduated from an accredited school.
- b. Sonographers who have ARDMS credentials and worked as a sonographer in Nova Scotia for past 12 months.
- c. Sonographers who do not have Sonography Canada or ARDMS credentials but have been working in ultrasound in Nova Scotia for a period of time during each of the past five consecutive years.

In the case of MRTs, the College will continue to use the same credentialing criteria, so there is no transitioning period for MRTs.

13.) Will practitioners in non-clinical settings such as management, research, education etc. Require a different license?

No, like specialized sonographers and MRTs, non-clinical practitioners will also have a title of DMS and/or MRT. Non-clinical practitioners will have to remain relevant to practice by maintaining College requirements.

14.) What type of license will a new graduate have?

New graduates of Canadian accredited programs will have a temporary license to practice, valid from the time of graduation. They are expected to write first seating of their credentialing exams and temporary license becomes full active license once they present proof of passing. If they fail the exam, the temporary license will expire, and the graduate cannot work until they have successfully completed their entry to practice exams.

15.) Do I need Personal Liability Insurance (PLI)?

Yes, all regulated registrants must have the required minimum PLI as set out in NSCMIRTP policy and must provide confirmation of PLI through their application form and annual registration renewal. The College does not provide PLI, however it can be purchased through CAMRT, Sonography Canada, OAMRS or other sources. By current NSCMIRTP policy all registrants must have a PLI policy which has a minimum coverage of \$2,000,000 per claim/\$5,000,000 aggregate. Prior to purchasing private PLI please check the NSCMIRTP website for the PLI policy to ensure you are purchasing adequate insurance. The NSCMIRTP requires you to always hold your own personal PLI, in addition to your employer's insurance because;

- a. Employer policies do not always cover expenses such as legal defence in professional disciplinary matters.
- b. The employer's insurance company may sue you for reimbursement of any money they paid out as a result of your actions.

- c. Your personal PLI also follows you if you work at multiple sites with more than one employer.
- d. Your employer insurance may not cover you for any advice or volunteering you do outside of your work.
- e. When you retire or leave employment, personal PLI covers you for a period during which patients may still bring a claim against you.

16.) What is the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program?

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program is a mandatory component of registration in the NSCMIRTP, required of all registrants. Non-compliance with the requirements of the CPDs is deemed to exhibit unprofessional conduct and could place a registrant's practice license at risk. The cycle for the Continuing Professional Development Program begins on November 1st and continues through to October 31st two years following. In order to comply, registrants must complete all components of the CPD on the online platform through the NSCMIRTP website.

a. Do I still need to obtain CPDs for Sonography Canada/ARDMS?

Yes, if you remain a member of these associations and they require you to obtain CPDs. The good news is that most CPD credits may be submitted to both the College and any professional association.

b. How many CPD credits will I have to obtain?

NSCMIRTP registrants will be required to complete 30 continuing professional development (CPD) credits every two years. Unused credits will not "roll over" into the next cycle.

c. Will the CPD program begin as soon as the College is formed?

Yes. When the College is formed, registrants will be expected to begin earning and tracking their CPD activities. If the College is formed in the middle of a calendar year, required credits will be pro-rated according to the number of months remaining. At the time of proclamation, the College will communicate exact dates of when CPD will begin and number of months (and number of credits) the first reporting cycle will cover. The same is true for registrants entering the College. CPD credits will be prorated based on the calendar month of registration. MRTs and DMSs will receive plenty of notice of date CDP will become active.

d. Will the College provide educational opportunities to registrants?

The NSCMIRTP plans to continue to provide a fall educational ½ day and either a conference or spring ½ day of education each year to registrants. While there will be other occasions that webinars/lectures will be developed and provided to members this

will not be a primary focus of the College. Attaining required CDP is the responsibility of the registrant. The College will support this by providing some educational opportunities each year and will also be developing online resources to help direct registrants to existing resources to attain required CDP.

e. Will people working part time require the same number of CPDs?

Yes. All NSCMIRTP registrants will be required to complete the same mandatory CPD - 30 credits/two years. The aim of the CPD program is to ensure registrants remain current with practice regardless if they are full-time, part-time or casual.

17.) Do any other provinces regulate MRTs and sonographers?

Yes. MRTs are regulated in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. They are in process of being regulated in Newfoundland, PEI, and British Columbia. Sonographers are regulated in Ontario and Quebec and are in process in Alberta, and British Columbia.

18.) Will regulation eliminate entertainment ultrasound?

No regulation will not eliminate entertainment ultrasound. However, the College will develop clear guidelines of what defines a diagnostic procedure to ensure the public is protected.

For further information, please contact NSAMRT at: info@nsamrt.ca or 1-902-832-3167

References

Alberta College of Medical Diagnostic and Therapeutic Technologists. (2017). Frequently Asked

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