



CONDUCT COUNTS!

Protection & Use of Title

SCENARIO

Carol earned a diploma in Respiratory Therapy in 1991. She worked in the NICU in a large teaching hospital from '91 to '99, before she and her husband moved to the United States where he successfully expanded his technology business. Carol planned on writing the NBRC and practicing in California where they settled, but shortly after they arrived she discovered she was pregnant and decided to wait to enter the American workforce. Well, months turned into years and before Carol knew it their three children were well into their elementary-school education, and her husband was talking about moving home to Ontario.

After getting her family re-established in Southern Ontario, Carol met up with some of her RT friends who she had kept in touch with throughout the years. Now that her children were older and a bit more self-sufficient she told them, she had time to pursue her career again. Carol knew that she would have to get her documentation together for her re-application to the CRTO, so she pulled out her boxes of old textbooks, transcripts and test results. She told her friends the next time they got together about all the reminiscing she'd done while rifling through those things, and they chatted about some of their old classmates who were now Managers or Charge RTs in different facilities.

Someone suggested that Carol may want to try to reach out to some of the people who would remember her from back in the day, and that a LinkedIn account might help her to find connections that could lead to work. The next day Carol created a LinkedIn™ account and began networking to make contacts. Unfortunately, Carol listed herself as a "Respiratory Therapist" on her profile. A CRTO Member saw this and searched the online Register of Members for Carol. When her name was not listed, the Member emailed the Registrar.

RESULTS

By ensuring that only registered members of a healthcare profession are entitled to use the protected title, the public can be assured that the individual has met current criteria that qualify them as being able to practise safely and effectively. In Ontario, only CRTO Members are permitted to use the title "Registered Respiratory Therapist" or a variation or abbreviation of this title. In addition, using designations RRT, GRT, PRT or RT are limited to CRTO Members. The online Register displays individuals' current CRTO status.

The CRTO followed up on the concerns about Carol. She was informed that she needed to cease using the RT title and designation immediately as she was not currently registered. Carol agreed to do so and revised her LinkedIn profile to comply with the CRTO's request.



PROFESSIONALISM

"Professionalism" or professional conduct is a term often used to describe the behaviours that are expected of individuals who hold a certain role in society. A "professional" is typically someone who has obtained skills that are recognized as requiring specific, intensive training and who applies those skills in a position impacting others (e.g., engineer, lawyer, RT, PT, MD, etc.). Professionals are often held to moral, ethical and legal standards because of this potential impact.



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EXPECTATION

The CRTO issues a handful of “cease and desist” letters each year. For individuals who have never been registered with the CRTO, it’s often an issue of being unaware of the legislation that restricts the use of titles/designations. Generally, when informed that they are not permitted to use “Respiratory Therapist” or “RT” they abide by the request. If they do not amend their usage, the CRTO can obtain a court injunction.

Sometimes, like Carol, it’s a former CRTO Member (either because they have resigned or been revoked) who continues to use the title or designation, who needs to be reminded of the limitations. Former Members can use “Respiratory Therapist” or “RT” if they qualify the time frame in which they were registered and entitled to use them. For example, by stating “former Respiratory Therapist” or “RRT from June 1994 to November 1999” any confusion can be avoided.

BOTTOM LINE

Title protection is intended to help the public identify individuals who are regulated healthcare professionals and have thereby met certain standards or qualifications.

RESOURCES

[Registration and Use of Title Professional Practice Guideline](#)

[Standards of Practice](#)

