



# CONDUCT COUNTS!

## Professional Misconduct

### SCENARIO

Jennifer has practised Respiratory Therapy for over twenty-five years. She's worked in just about every hospital-based RT position over her career. She loves her profession, but her husband recently quit working and her daughter and son-in-law moved back to the area with her three grandchildren last summer, so she is planning to hang-up her stethoscope at the end of this calendar year and enjoy her well-earned retirement.

Jennifer saw the email from the CRTO in September, notifying her that she had been selected to submit her PORTfolio and do the online quiz about the CRTO's guidelines, and although she intended to email them to let them know she is planning to retire, she set it aside and never replied. She thinks that there may have been other emails (and maybe even a phone call she recalls her husband mentioning) from the CRTO, but again, thinking more about retirement than anything, Jennifer had deleted the messages without opening them.

A few weeks after renewing her CRTO registration online, Jennifer noticed that there was a letter in the mailbox from the CRTO. It was the second or perhaps third envelope she'd seen in the mail with that distinctive blue logo, but she chose to leave it unopened just as she had done with the others, assuming this time that it was her registration card or receipt. Then about a month later, the doorbell rang and the person to whom she opened the door, asked if she was Jennifer. When she said that she was, the person handed her an envelope, and walked away. Opening the letter, Jennifer was shocked to read that she had been referred for a Discipline hearing for her failure to comply with the CRTO's Quality Assurance Program.

### RESULTS

By ignoring the requests to submit her QA requirements, Jennifer now appears to be in breach of the Quality Assurance Regulation and therefore, the Professional Misconduct Regulation. The fact that Jennifer has been completely unresponsive to the CRTO's attempts to communicate with her about her requirements has made her appear willfully non-compliant. Without any information to the contrary, the QA Committee members have no idea that Jennifer isn't really opposed to doing the Program, she just thought she could avoid it until she retired.

Fortunately for Jennifer, being served with the notice of the Discipline hearing shocked her into action. Immediately after reading the letter she called the CRTO and explained the situation. At this point, she had to be referred to the CRTO's lawyer to negotiate a resolution.



### 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 Quality Assurance Program is one of the benefits and burdens of being a regulated health professional. It is the way in which the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has decided to assign the monitoring of healthcare professionals' continuing education to Colleges. All CRTO Members must keep track of their professional development and if asked, provide access to their records. In addition, Members must indicate on their annual registration renewal whether they are participating in the QA Program.

The QA Committee that oversees the Program has a fairly generous deferral process. If a Member is on leave, ill, or caring for an ill parent or child, the Committee will generally offer some additional time (from a few weeks to a few months depending on the issue) to submit the QA requirements. However, Members who ask for deferrals because they are planning to retire or whose lives are "too busy" for other reasons are likely to be denied additional time. The RTs who sit on the QA Committee know that it only takes a few hours to complete both components of the QA Program and feel that it is the least Members can do to demonstrate their currency.

### BOTTOM LINE

Ignoring your requirements won't make them go away, in fact, it will only create more problems.

### RESOURCES

[QA and Practice](#)

[GROW](#)

[Allied Health Professional Development Fund](#)

