



CONDUCT COUNTS!

Conduct Unbecoming A Professional

SCENARIO

Margot has practised Respiratory Therapy for nearly twenty-five years. She worked in ICUs and wards for most of that time, but accepted a straight-days position in the cardiac diagnostics lab just over 18 months ago. She works alongside pulmonary function techs and others who are not registered with the CRTO, although they appear to practise partially within the scope of Respiratory Therapy. When the CRTO registration renewal came around this year, Margot missed the March 1 deadline and decided impulsively not to renew. She rationalized that she didn't have to be a Registered Respiratory Therapist to do her job, and that she could sure use that \$500.

A few weeks after the registration renewal deadline on March 1, Margot received a letter 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. Shortly after that letter went to Margot, the CRTO published the names of suspended Members in the eBulletin newsletter. This prompted a call to the CRTO from someone who said that she worked at the same hospital as Margot, and that Margot was still working in the cardiac diagnostics lab.

RESULTS

As a follow-up, the CRTO contacted the manager of the cardio-pulmonary department where Margot worked. The manager was quite surprised, stating that being registered as an RRT was a job requirement in that diagnostics lab. He confirmed that Margot had worked her regular hours during the past two weeks and said that he would provide a copy of the schedule to the CRTO as verification. He also said he would go and speak with Margot immediately after hanging up, and have her contact the CRTO. When Margot called back, she admitted that she hadn't thought her decision through about not renewing, and assumed that she could "simply not be a Member any longer".

Margot was sent home by her employer that day and told that an internal investigation would be launched because she had placed her patients and the hospital at risk. In order to lift the suspension on her certificate of registration with the CRTO, she was required to pay an additional \$250. On top of the extra fee, the CRTO's Registrar referred allegations of professional misconduct to the Inquiries, Complaints & Reports Committee. The Committee reviewed the information provided by the employer and Margot's explanation for not renewing. In the end, they decided to "take no action" because Margot had already had to pay the extra \$250 and had been suspended by her employer for three (3) days. However the matter will remain on Margot's file indefinitely and may be referenced by the Committee again if there are any other allegations against Margot.



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

Being registered with the CRTO involves more than simply paying \$500 a year. When the CRTO issues a certificate of registration, we are verifying that you have met certain criteria: initial education, training and testing; ongoing professional development and upholding the standards of the profession. In return, you receive the status that comes with being a professional, gain the protection of your title as a Respiratory Therapist, have the opportunity to participate in developing standards, guidelines and regulations for the profession's growth and evolution; elect Council and Committee members; sit on working groups, and act as assessors for the QA Program or internationally trained applicants. Also, part of the CRTO's mandate is providing an avenue for addressing concerns to help ensure that anyone calling themselves an RT has met these criteria and has the same opportunities. As an RT, you have certain obligations such as knowing what's expected of you (i.e., opening correspondence from the CRTO), and what may happen if you choose not to uphold the expectations of a self-regulated health professional.

If Margot had opened the letters from the CRTO, she would have read that if suspended she could no longer use the "Respiratory Therapist" title or hold herself out as someone qualified to practise Respiratory Therapy. And if Margot had called the CRTO about her assumption that she'd "simply not be a Member anymore", she would have been advised to check her employer's requirements for being registered. Secondly, the CRTO could have informed Margot that deciding not to renew wouldn't be the best approach if she wanted to continue working.

BOTTOM LINE

Make sure you have all the facts before you make decisions regarding your registration with the CRTO.

RESOURCES

[About Your Certificate of Registration](#)

[Resignation, Suspension and Revocation](#)

[How Are Decisions About Complaints Made?](#)

