



College of Respiratory
Therapists of Ontario

Ordre des thérapeutes
respiratoires de l'Ontario

PATIENT SAFETY

Practice FAQs

March 2012

QUESTION

What can the College do about non-regulated people applying CPAP to clients in the community? I think this is a patient safety issue.

ANSWER

As you know the CRTO only regulates the practice of its Members, registered Respiratory Therapists. The mission of the CRTO is as follows:

The College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario, through its administration of the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#) and the [Respiratory Therapy Act](#) is dedicated to ensuring that respiratory care services provided to the public by its members are delivered in a safe and ethical manner.

The CRTO has continually asserted its position on the administration of positive pressure as a procedure that falls under the controlled act authorized to RTs of administering a substance by inhalation. This has been our [Interpretation of Authorized Acts](#) as long as the College has been around!

One of the standards of practice of the profession related to safety is to “foster and contribute to a culture of patient/client and employee safety in the practice environment by maximizing patient/client safety and the quality of care through effective collaboration and communication with the healthcare team”.

It would seem that this may be an opportunity for you could use the College’s [Standards of Practice](#) to advocate for the best interest of patients/clients, to ensure safe and ethical practice. Here’s how.....

As you know, our standards are intended to inform Respiratory Therapists of their accountabilities and to inform the public what they can expect when receiving care from a Respiratory Therapist.

Here are some assumptions about Respiratory Therapists that you can share with your colleagues and patients/clients:



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Respiratory Therapists:

- possess a specialized body of knowledge;
- are committed to maintaining a high standard of professional practice through self-governance;
- are committed to lifelong learning and the development of knowledge, skills and abilities throughout their career;
- are committed to on-going professional development;
- are committed to the principle of accountability in their professional practice; and
- are committed to practicing in an ethical manner.

These are strong points that can be made for why Respiratory Therapists are competent and accountable practitioners to be applying CPAP in the interest of patient safety.

If I may suggest, try to look at the standards of practice from a different perspective - as reasons to support respiratory therapy services provided by Respiratory Therapists. Don't forget these standards were written by RTs (and representatives of the public), and have been reviewed/updated recently (2010). This is how self-regulation works.

I am sure that there are many clinical reasons that you, as an RT with expertise in the application of CPAP, could provide to patients or employers to support why your College views the application of positive airway pressure as a controlled act. For example, citing current research, addressing how CPAP works, discussing risk management associated with positive pressure ventilation, advantages vs. disadvantages of positive pressure, indications, contraindications, adverse effects etc.

With regard to non-regulated individuals applying CPAP, the College has no jurisdiction or authority to prevent them from doing so unless they are using the title Respiratory Therapists or something similar that has the potential to confuse patients into believing that the individuals are being held to the same standards as a regulated professional.