



February 21, 2008

Dear Premier Campbell,

In my capacity as Executive Director of both the Canadian Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (CSDMS) and the Canadian Association of Registered Diagnostic Ultrasound Professionals (CARDUP) I would like to take this opportunity to provide feedback to you regarding the B.C. Speech from the Throne given on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

First, I would like to introduce the general functions and memberships of both organisations. The CSDMS includes in its membership ultrasound professionals from all specialty areas of Diagnostic Medical Ultrasound as well as technical representatives, educators and students. The purpose of the CSDMS is to foster excellence in patient care, professional interaction and to promote the highest level of professional standards of practice for sonographers in Canada. CARDUP on the other hand is a registry body comprised of diagnostic medical sonographers, (including general, vascular and cardiac) committed to the establishment of bilingual written and practical examinations that reflect Canadian diagnostic ultrasound standards and competencies. The mission of CARDUP is to provide a current registry of certified diagnostic ultrasound professionals who meet national competency standards and to promote high standards of professional practice. CARDUP is committed to ensuring employers that CARDUP registrants are knowledgeable and clinically capable sonographers.

It is the position of both CARDUP and CSDMS that diagnostic medical ultrasound examinations should be performed by medical personnel who have been properly trained to perform ultrasounds and credentialed in the ultrasound speciality in which they work. Our organisations define diagnostic medical ultrasounds as medical procedures which are requested by a physician, performed by a sonographer and interpreted by a physician with expertise in ultrasound. The areas and structures of the body that can be examined using ultrasound are vast and include the infant head, the eyes, the neck, the chest, the heart, many of the abdominal, pelvic and reproductive organs, the developing foetus and vascular systems. Most ultrasound examinations are non-invasive but with the advances in technology, some procedures require the use of more invasive methods such as transvaginal, transrectal, transesophageal or transluminal probes. Proper didactic and clinical training is available through Canadian accredited ultrasound programs. Credentialing is based on clinical competency and knowledge based exams.

The success of an ultrasound study is highly dependant on the skill of the sonographer performing it. The Sonographer must have an educational background that is strong in knowledge of ultrasound physics, anatomy, physiology and pathology in order to analyze sonographic data and to enable the sonographer to make the proper diagnostic judgements between ultrasonic normal and abnormal states.

Sonography plays a critical role within the health care system by providing key information that enables the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of conditions. If performed incorrectly there is a significant risk of harm to the patient through misdiagnosis and ineffective treatment. The World Health Organisation states that, "Inadequate [ultrasound] training means a lack of qualified personnel, improper use of equipment and incorrect interpretation of images."

As Health Care Professionals we understand the fear and anxiety experienced by our patients. Any time an individual is sent for a test there is always a degree of uncertainty. The last thing they should have to worry about is the qualifications of the individual performing the examination.

If the intent of the Ministry of Health in British Columbia is to have Nurses become competent in the profession of Sonography, CSDMS and CARDUP feel strongly that their training programs include the Canadian Medical Association approved National Competency Profile for Sonography. All Canadian accredited Sonography programs currently teach to these standards. You will find enclosed the Canadian National Competency Profiles for Sonography for your review.

Currently there is a sonography training program through the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in Vancouver that has been accredited by the Canadian Medical Association Conjoint Committee for Accreditation. This post diploma program has taught nurses in the past. With their nursing background, these individuals are able to obtain the knowledge, skill and judgement required for competency in sonography within a 12 month program.

Our organisations would welcome the opportunity to be included in the list of professional organisations that could provide additional information applicable to the proposed changes particularly as one of the changes is directly related to ultrasound.

Sincerely,

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