



Enhancing vision
Understanding the
role of Opticians



Making a difference
MSF professionals
share their story

**MEDIA
PLANET**

July 2012

CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE



LEARNING ABOUT THE CANADIAN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS

Highlighting Canada's Allied Health Professions and their
problems with funding, labour shortages and awareness.



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ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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CHALLENGES



With changing technologies and policies, Canada remains a **leader in world health.**

The impact on patient care; The good, the bad and the ugly

To slightly misquote a famous literary opening line, “It is the best of times, it is the worst of times” in Canada’s health system.

There is no lack of opinion and reporting on what ails the system, from unrelenting wait times to shortages of health providers to the tidal wave of aging boomers — and on it goes, all served up on a platter of increasingly curtailed fiscal resources.

Silver lining

However, behind the reports and stories can be found many uncelebrated examples of successful change and adaptation, including health providers working to their full scope of practice, a decrease in some key wait times and adverse events, and the emergence of strong e-health models. Perhaps most importantly, survey after survey finds upwards of 90 per cent of Canadians satisfied with the treatment they receive when they are ill or injured.

But we have a ways to go, and require direction. What are the priorities? How do we get there?

Ways to improve

Through an informal and admittedly non-scientific assessment of ten ‘prescriptions’ for the health system — including reports and opinion

pieces from the OECD, CMA, CNA, the TD Bank and journalist André Picard among others — 21 ‘critical’ issues were identified. Interestingly, all 10 reports had 5 issues in common:

- Improve integration of health services across the continuum of care
- Provide options for Pharmacare
- Prioritize illness prevention and health promotion
- Link funding to outcomes
- Coordinate and support Canada’s health human resources

Leading the pack

However, the foundation piece for this ‘to do’ list is leadership. At every level. We need politicians of all stripes and jurisdictions to find common ground in agreeing on what needs to be done, and by whom. We need governors/trustees with passion, integrity and business-like oversight. We need health system administrators to invoke bold and courageous solutions even in semi-recessionary times. And we need our health providers to be full players, respected for their skills and expertise, allowed to work to their full scope of practice, supported in their professional development needs, and encouraged to embrace new opportunities.

In 2011, health professionals comprised 12.8 per cent of Canada’s employed workforce including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, psychologists, physiotherapists, and many, many others, in settings includ-



Pamela C. Fralick
President and CEO,
Canadian Healthcare Association

ing hospitals, long term care facilities, community care, and home care. The health industry not only provides health to the population, but also to the economy!

Thinking outside the box

Canadians don’t like to view the health sector as an industry — it evokes a certain queasiness in a universal, publicly-funded system. But to do so allows us to think outside the box regarding future needs, if we truly do want transformative change. When it comes to the people shouldering the health system, what are the needs and opportunities of the future, beyond the traditional professions one thinks of?

There are a few examples that come quickly to mind. Qualified individuals will be required to supply and maintain in-home devices such as stair lifts, safety devices such as tub rails,

and mobility devices such as scooters. Mobile communications technologies such as tablets, Blackberries and cell phones for use by home care providers to access education and wellness resources while delivering care in patient’s homes are already essential tools, especially for those in rural and remote communities. The electronic health record, electronic prescribing and lab orders, and patient forums will see greater use. Keeping these technologies working will be critical to the delivery of many health services.

Looking to the future

As facilities are upgraded, greened and modified to be more elder friendly, training enough skilled trades people and technologists will be a priority. As we prioritize issues such as mental health, health promotion and independent living, opportunities for workers and businesses in the fields of mental health, optometry, physiotherapy and geriatrics will only grow. And as healthy providers working in healthy workplaces provide better patient care, specialists in occupational health and safety will be essential.

These are exciting times to pursue a career in the health sector; a promising future awaits those who seize the opportunity and run with it.

PAMELA C. FRALICK
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Lack of Resources Threatens Patient Care

Canadian labs produce over 440 million test results each year. When you consider that these results are informing the medical decisions being made by physicians and other qualified practitioners, it’s easy to see how vital the lab is to the health of Canadians.

Despite that, the laboratory remains an overlooked contributor to patient care. This affects the resources that are dedicated to the lab, which in turn, can cause serious challenges to patient care.

Like any other area in a hospital, labs compete for resources for equipment, supplies, human resources and professional development training.

On average, labs account for less than 5 per cent of a hospital’s overall operating budget and yet, the results generated in the lab inform a large part of the medical decisions being made. When you look at it, that is

actually a tremendous return on invest for the hospital.

Looming Shortages

Human resource issues are a significant concern in most labs across the country. Impending retirements threaten to leave many labs with shortages of qualified professionals. In fact, the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science predicts that over 42 per cent of Canada’s medical laboratory technologists will be eligible to retire in the next ten years. The current supply of new graduates will not be sufficient to address the projected shortages.

One barrier to addressing this issue is the appropriate resourcing of clinical education, which is vital to the training of the next generation of professionals. Without appropriate resources, clinical education is a further stress on an already burdened staff.

In a time when results are expected immediately, even for routine testing, the system is under great pressure.

Targeted funding is needed for dedicated clinical educators to support onsite clinical education.

Rural Communities & Incentive Programs

Staffing shortages will have a particu-



Christine Nielsen
Executive Director,
Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory
Science

larly harsh impact on our rural communities. While incentive programs are in place to entice doctors and nurses to these communities, medical laboratory professionals have, yet again, been overlooked.

Funding needs

The federal government has committed to forgive a portion of Canada’s Student Loans for new family physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses. Medical laboratory technologists should be included in such programs to ensure that all Canadians have access to quality health care.

Canada’s health care system is complex and there are no easy fixes to the challenges we face. However, we are all looking for the same outcome; that all Canadians receive the same high level of care. Without qualified professionals to generate lab results, quality patient care is impossible.

CHRISTINE NIELSEN
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WE RECOMMEND

Kate Rexe
Public Policy Officer,
The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

PAGE 08

“We work in a very culturally-centered and client-centered form of practice, looking for the best intervention for each particular individual.”

Caring for athletes **p. 05**
What you need to know about athletic therapy.

Information management **p. 07**
Canadian hospitals going paperless

MEDIA PLANET

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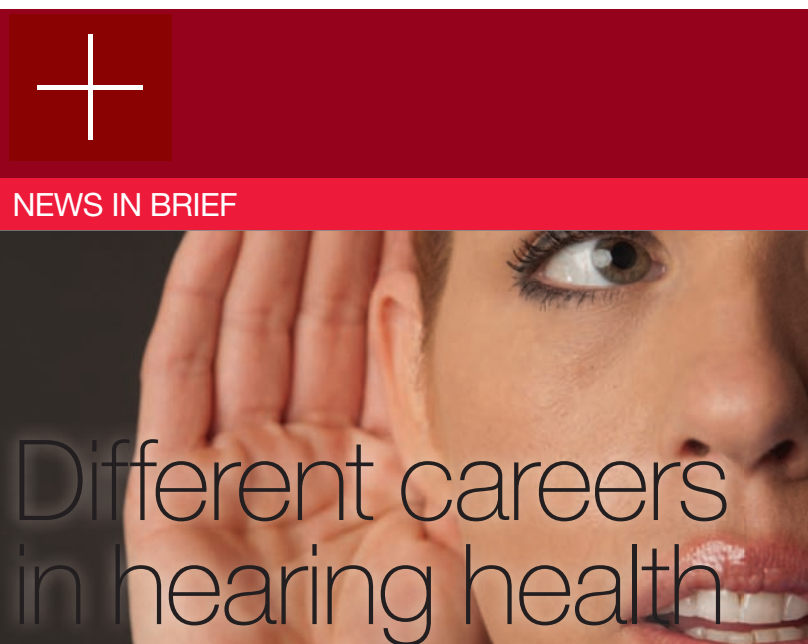
THINKING OF A CAREER IN MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE?

Research the job

- Tour a lab whether in a hospital or the community.
- Talk to a practicing laboratory technologist.
- Shadow a practicing lab technologist for a day, if possible.
- Be aware of the specimen types that will be handled at the laboratory (e.g., body fluids, stools, sputum, etc.).
- There’s a national exam (CSMLS) to be written after you finish training.
- Clinical placement may be out of the province.
- Membership in a regulatory college is required (in Ontario, the College of Medical Laboratory Technologist of Ontario or CMLTO). The CMLTO requires an ongoing professional portfolio consisting of 60 hours of professional development every two years.
- Eligibility for employment in broad geographic areas including across Canada and in many states in the U.S.A.
- Job description: very hands-on, with limited direct patient contact.

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CHALLENGES



Different careers in hearing health

Humans rely on communication for everyday activities. When communication is compromised, with problems such as hearing loss, life can become difficult. Audiologists and

Hearing Instrument Practitioner

■ Hearing Instrument Practitioner is the health profession in which a person provides many services. These services include assessment of hearing using an audiometer (or other methods) to identify hearing loss; they also select, prepare, alter, adapt, verify, sell, and distribute hearing instruments.

■ Non-Audiologists interested in this career require two years post-secondary education as well as a hearing aid course.

■ The hearing aid course is provided by IHIS, Grant MacEwan University (Alberta) www.macewan.ca/hearingaid, George Brown College (Ontario) www.gbrownc.on.ca, Conestoga College (Ontario) www.conestogac.on.ca, or Rosemont College (Quebec) www.rosemont.edu.

■ A practicum of 840 hours is required under the supervision of an approved Hearing Instrument Practitioner by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC. If interested, please visit the College website www.csh-pbpc.org to review the Guidelines for HIP Students posed under the Publications tab.

Audiologist

■ Audiology is the health profession in which a person provides the services of assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention. Audiologists treat patients for the purposes of promoting and maintaining communicative, auditory and vestibular health of the following:

■ Auditory and related communication disorders

■ Conditions peripheral and central auditory system dysfunction

■ Related peripheral and central vestibular system dysfunction.

■ A prerequisite post-secondary degree is required (B.Sc).

■ To become certified, Audiologists must obtain a Master's Degree. Graduate programs in Audiology offer accredited curriculums.

■ Graduate programs are offered by the University of Western Ontario, the University of Ottawa, the University of Montreal, the University of British Columbia, and Dalhousie University.

DIANE O'CONNOR

Registrar and Executive Director,

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HOW I MADE IT



Work-ready nurses for multicultural healthcare

Loy Asheri is a registered nurse originally from Tanzania who graduated from CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) in 2004 and was the winner of the CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award in 2011. CARE Centre is a bridging training program funded by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Over a decade of service CARE Centre has helped more than 1,000 nurses from 140 countries to achieve registration to practice in the province.

Asheri is currently employed at Sunnybrook Hospital in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit, and also works at CARE Centre as a part-time case manager. She was also the inaugural CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award winner in 2011.

"As a single mom of four young children, coming to a foreign country was pretty overwhelming: financially, psychologically, socially and emotionally," said Asheri. "I almost gave up my dream of nursing in Canada. But CARE Centre reminded me that I already had knowledge, skills and experience. They gave me an

action plan. They restored my passion."

Nurses are often called the backbone of the health care system, the largest employee group in the sector.

"With population forecasts, we can see why IENs are more important than ever to the Ontario health care system," said Zubeida Ramji, CARE Centre's Executive Director. "Particularly in the long-term care sector, nurses who can speak different languages and bring experience from their countries of origin are of huge benefit."

To celebrate the achievements of its member IENs, CARE Centre launched The CARE Centre Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award, named after the late distinguished nursing leader who passed away last year. The deadline for nominations this year is August 17th. Information is available on the website at www.care4nurses.org/ienaward.

TINA NOVOTNY

Marketing & Communications

Coordinator

CARE Centre for Internationally

Educated Nurses

editorial@mediaplanet.com



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CSMLS SCSLM

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MATTHEW MULICK, Combined Lab & X-ray Tech, Alberta Health Services
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INSPIRATION

FACT

2

PRACTICING ABROAD CAN BE AN INCREDIBLY REWARDING ASPECT OF YOUR CAREER

Question: Looking for a career in healthcare that allows you to travel?
Answer: Médecins Sans Frontières, the Canadian extension of Doctors Without Borders, provides medical professionals the opportunity for rewarding careers abroad.

For MSF field workers, suffering knows no borders

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

“People are hungry to be brought closer to the world, even its hard parts,” writes Dr. James Maskalyk of Toronto in his book *Six Months in Sudan*. What separates action from inaction? “It is not indifference,” he explains, “it is distance.”

Setting the bar

In 1971, a group of French doctors who had worked in Biafra created Médecins Sans Frontières, the Canadian extension of Doctors Without Borders. It has grown into one of the world’s leading independent international medical relief organizations, and won the Nobel Peace Prize. Canada joined the MSF movement in 1991 (www.msf.ca), and Canadians have taken on over 1,800 field assignments in some 80 countries.

Maskalyk, an emergency doctor at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, is drawn to working with what he calls “marginalized populations”. These populations include; individuals who

cannot provide or care for themselves or their family due to drug addictions, mental illness and/or other debilitating disorders.

Building character

MSF responds to public health emergencies caused by armed conflict, epidemics, food insecurity and natural disasters. For instance, at a refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya, Maskalyk managed the paediatrics ward and a feeding centre for malnourished children. In fact, it was his work as the first official blogger for MSF that led to the creation of his book.

Why work with MSF? If you don’t, he says, why expect anyone else to? “It’s the ethos of medicine, to take care of people who are suffering.”

Varying professions

A typical MSF mission lasts 6-12 months. MSF draws on a wide range of medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, epidemiologists, dieticians, lab technicians, pharmacists, and more. Project success also

depends on professionals who support things like logistics, water and sanitation.

Nancy Graham, a Toronto public health nurse, has been on three MSF assignments. In post-conflict Sierra Leone, she was an inpatient hospital manager, at a time when “the health care system had virtually collapsed”. Later, in Sri Lanka, she helped to establish nursing operations for an orthopaedic surgery program for the war-injured.

Shaping lives

This July, Graham returned from six months in South Sudan, “the newest country in the world,” she says, “and one of the poorest”. As an outreach team leader, she provided primary health care services to several communities within a 60 km radius of an MSF-managed hospital in a town called Raja.

It took Graham up to three hours to traverse the bumpy roads to the health centres. En route, she’d pass baboon troops, women carrying

babies on their backs and firewood on their heads, small mudbrick houses, and military checkpoints. She and her health care team handled consultations, vaccinations, nutrition assessments, disease surveillance, and training health ministry staff.

Eye-opening experience

Graham laments that far too many deaths in developing countries — from malaria, malnutrition and a lack of vaccinations — are preventable. She says that MSF limits assignments to a year because they don’t want workers to get burned out or hardened. “You want people with that compassion and sense of injustice.”

Her MSF work has made enormous difference to the lives of patients and the capacity of health care workers in developing countries, but those experiences have also shaped Graham as a health care professional. Through MSF she has acquired knowledge far outside her focused area of nursing, and learned creative ways to promote health.

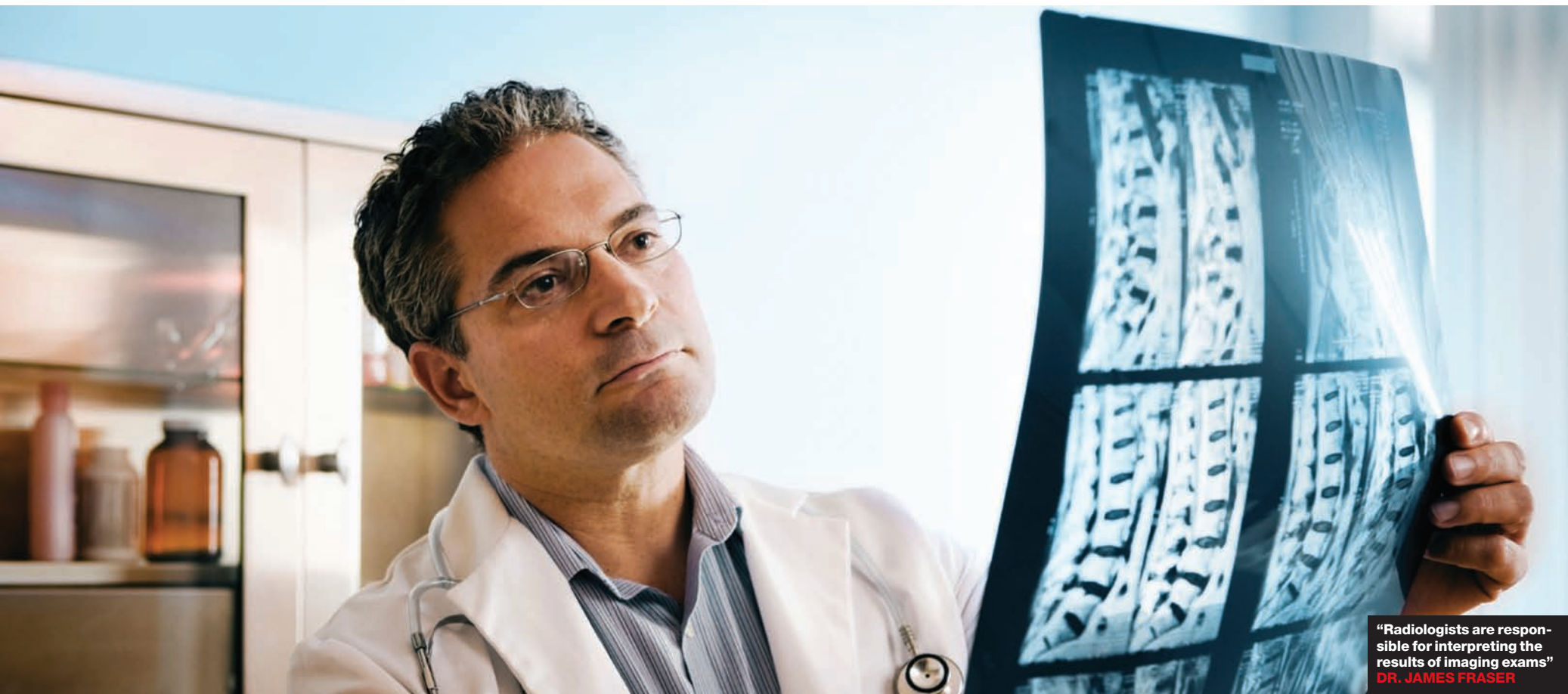
Rewarding careers

“Doing international work has also made me more understanding of diversity, access and equity,” she says, “and more sensitive to working with people of different cultures, including refugees and new immigrants.”

For health care professionals like Graham and Maskalyk, their careers in Canada are already fulfilling. But working with MSF has expanded their knowledge and understanding, further rewarding the careers and lives they have built for themselves.

“There is no other work,” says Maskalyk, “except diminishing the suffering of people where it’s avoidable. The more I’m able to contribute to the common good, the less questions I have about whether I’m living a life that has meaning.”

STUART FOXMAN
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“Radiologists are responsible for interpreting the results of imaging exams”
DR. JAMES FRASER

The profession behind medical imaging diagnostics

Question: What makes radiology an expanding and fast-paced profession?

Answer: With technology changing constantly, a radiologist must always stay on top of their game while working with other medical professionals.

Diagnosing an illness or disease, delivering procedures and therapies, and determining if treatment is working often requires the ability to see inside the body in ways the human eye cannot.

Medical imaging exams and procedures provide this ability, including X-ray, MRI, ultrasound, CT scan, and PET scan, among others. It takes many healthcare professionals working as a team to provide medical imaging care, including physicians, sonographers, technologists, medical physicists and



“An integral part of your healthcare team, radiologist must work closely with your referring physician to establish diagnosis and treatment”

Dr. James Fraser
President,
Canadian Association of Radiologists

an array of administrative staff and nursing personnel.

I am a radiologist, a physician member of the team. Radiologists specialize in interpreting the results

of imaging exams; some of us, known as interventional radiologists, are responsible for the delivery of image-guided procedures and therapies. We work with our healthcare colleagues,

like physicists and technologists, to ensure the quality of your medical images, the appropriateness of the tests you receive, and patient safety throughout your imaging care.

Importance of radiologists

As an integral member of your healthcare team, radiologists must work closely with your referring physician to establish diagnosis and treatment.

Family physicians and other specialists also turn to radiologists for consultation on the safest and most effective exam for their patients. Often referred to as the “appropriateness” of imaging care, it means determining that the medical imaging being performed is the right test, at the right time, by the right person.

Canadian Association of Radiologists

Radiology is a medical profession that experiences rapid technological advances. Given that, the Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR), the national association representing all radiologists in Canada, creates evidence-informed clinical referral guidelines to support obtaining the best radiological result for diagnosis and treatment.

As a radiologist and President of the CAR, I was pleased to collaborate with fellow Medical Imaging Team members in the first ever Medical Imaging Team Day on May 17, 2012. You can learn more about your medical imaging team at www.imagingteam.ca.

DR. JAMES FRASER
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JULY 2012
MSF provides emergency medical care and basic necessities to vulnerable populations in the Gety Hospital and Boga health zones.
PHOTO: SYLVIE RAY

OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE ROLE OF OPTICIANS

What they do

An Optician is a health professional specially trained to supply, prepare and dispense optical appliances through the interpretation of prescriptions. They then adjust and adapt your glasses, contact lenses or special needs vision devices to ensure the perfect fit. A Licensed Optician interprets your vision prescription into the perfect lenses for your eyes.

Who they are

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Why you need them

Be sure to ask for a Licensed Optician's help when choosing your Vision Care solutions. You'll be surprised how they can help guide you through the maze of options to enhance your vision.

ROBERT DALTON
Executive Director,
Opticians Association of Canada
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Health in motion: Helping to ensure top physical performance

An injury, accident or disease can find you sidelined from the game of life. You don't have to be a pro or an Olympic athlete to need priority care.

The profession of Athletic Therapy grew out of the need for athletes and sports teams to have immediate access to expertise on injury prevention, emergency and acute care, assessment and rehabilitation of injuries and the development of conditioning programs.

If you attend a game involving NHL, CFL, NBA, Major League Baseball, or National Women's Hockey League teams, chances are there will be at least one AT behind the bench or patrolling the sidelines monitoring what's happening in the game and ready to respond to any injuries. Canadian Olympic, Pan Am, Commonwealth and Canada Games teams increasingly employ Athletic Therapists, as do university, college and high school sports programs.

ATs are also found in hospitals and private clinics where they assess and treat a variety of injuries and conditions, including injury assessment and rehabilitation. A number of extended health benefits insurers cover assessments and treatments by Athletic Therapists.

Getting there

To become a Certified Athletic Therapist (Canada)/ CAT(C), one must complete a degree program in Athletic Therapy at one of the seven-approved programs (Concordia University, Mount Royal University, University of

Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, York University, Sheridan College, and Camosun College) approved by the Canadian Athletic Therapist Association (CATA).

Candidates must have completed at least 1200 hrs. of clinical experience, have obtained (and maintain) a valid First Responder or equivalent certification and then must successfully complete a comprehensive written examination set by CATA. CATA insists that CAT(C)s engage in continuous education by taking at least X hours of CATA-accredited courses each year during which they practise.

Ontario regulation

Athletic Therapists are not currently regulated in Ontario, but the Ontario Athletic Therapist Association (OATA) has been mandated by its members to seek regulation for the profession under the Regulated Health Professions Act.

The OATA is hopeful that regulation can be achieved within the next two or three years. In the meantime, CATA provides open, transparent and effective regulation of CAT(C)s in Ontario and across Canada by stipulating professional ethics and a code of conduct and standards of practice and by providing a complaints and disciplinary process that is open to any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the care received from an accredited member.

STEF MOSER,
CHAIR OF OATA
editorial@mediaplanet.com

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Every day in every way, when we apply our bodies to tasks at hand, we are in athletic pursuit of a goal. Performance matters. Physical agility and stamina matter. Physical fitness keeps you healthy. Whether you are a firefighter, police officer, construction worker, business executive, gardener, active senior or busy mother, your body is being put to the test of endurance. You can combine a passion for top physical performance with the dream of a career in health care by pursuing post-secondary education and professional training as a Certified Athletic Therapist. For further information, please visit the OATA website.



The Ontario Athletic Therapists Association
www.ontarioathletictherapists.org



PANEL OF EXPERTS

| | Question #1 What would you say is the biggest challenge your profession is facing right now? | Question #2 For someone who is thinking about a career in your field, what advice would you give them? | Question #3 What do you think the future holds for your respective career? |
|--|--|---|--|
|  Joan Laurie Director, Medical Laboratory Science Program at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology | From an educational perspective, the biggest challenge is unquestionably the ability to access and maintain clinical placement sites for UOIT's fourth year practicum students. Without specific and sustained funding for clinical education in medical laboratory science (MLS), this will continue to be an issue. The impact of this has restricted UOIT's ability to expand the MLS program in order to be responsive to the anticipated growth in demand for diagnostic services in Durham region. | Anyone thinking about a career in medical laboratory science needs to research what a medical laboratory technologist actually does; both the science and the professional aspects of this career. Many students enter the program with just a superficial understanding of "what they are getting themselves into". The next step is to investigate the opportunities that are available for medical laboratory science graduates. There are many outside the traditional hospital diagnostic laboratory, including graduate studies. | Consumer and physician demand for diagnostic laboratory services is increasing. Demand, coupled with the anticipated population growth are excellent indicators of continued employment opportunities for medical laboratory science graduates. Also, the field is complex and rapidly advancing, therefore, new learning and opportunities to acquire new skills will continue to become available, including opportunities to do research in the field of medical laboratory science. |
|  Janice Schmidt Program Coordinator, Optician Georgian College | I would say the number one challenge that Opticianry is facing today is unregulated Internet Dispensing. There are a number of websites available where individuals can purchase eyeglasses or contact lenses online. Consumers/patients today need to be made aware and to fully understand that prescription eyewear must be dispensed by a registered eye care professional because of the risk of infections and complications associated with poorly measured eyeglasses or poorly fitted contact lenses. Visit an eye care professional when it comes to your eyes! A website, www.WebSmartOpticians.ca has been established to assist Opticians to be better informed and educated about leveraging the internet and social media to their advantage. | The profession of Opticianry is very diverse with many career opportunities. The education that you receive at Georgian in the Opticianry program will lend itself to many aspects of the eye care world. The career of Opticianry blends fashion, technology, and customer service through; designer trends, the selling of frames, fabrication of eyeglasses, and working as part of the eye care team with Optometrists or Ophthalmologists. The profession even allows you to work for yourself by opening your own Optical shop. | The profession is evolving and the next few years are going to be very exciting. A recent environmental scan which examines the profession up to the year 2020, proves that there will be jobs available. Additionally, Opticians have been working to expand our scope of practice to include refraction, which is a simple form of eye testing. Georgian College is also going through a curriculum renewal process to keep up to date with the changes. The next few years will see more emphasis in the curriculum in sciences, anatomy, the use of new technology in eyeglass lenses, and the instrumentation used for the fitting of contact lenses. |
|  Sheena Bhimji-Hewitt Professor, Ultrasound The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences | Ultrasound is a non-regulated profession in the province of Ontario. This creates a safety hazard for patients since there is no legislation to ensure that all Sonographers are adequately trained and anyone can open an Ultrasound school. The graduating Sonographer from a Canadian Medical Association accredited program will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to enter the practice of Ultrasound; since the educational outcomes follow the national competency profiles defined by the Canadian Association of Registered Diagnostic Ultrasound Professionals (CARDUP). | I would ask them to talk to Sonographers that are working at both hospital sites and clinics. As a Sonographer you need to be able to multi task, be physically fit, have excellent hand eye coordination for scanning and be a problem-solver that puts together your patient history, lab data, effective communication skills, sonographic findings and also be able to describe detected pathology/ abnormalities. You have to be able to deal with stressful situations working closely with patients that you may have found pathology on, be able to manage conflict and have empathy for your patients. | Ultrasound is not harmful (no research to date showing any harmful effects) and its use for detecting abnormalities / pathologies will always benefit patient diagnosis. Due to the advancing technologies, we are starting to see more and more detail in anatomy and can therefore pick up a lot of pathologies we may not have seen 5 years ago. An increase in the Sonographers' scope of practice to enable reporting can take away some of the burden from the Radiologists. However, this will only happen if we can obtain regulation for our profession. |

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INSPIRATION

Painting a picture and sculpting lives

■ **Question:** Who requires care from Occupational Therapists?
■ **Answer:** Patients who have an injury , disease, or disability, that wish to improve their mobility, productivity, and everyday activities.

To live with his rheumatoid arthritis, Jean Légaré of Neuville, Québec tried medication for inflammation and wrist and hand surgery. But one of his greatest breakthroughs came after working with an occupational therapist. Through tailored exercises and strategies, like how to avoid putting extra pressure on his fingers, he added strength and motion. Légaré, 66, was able to return to his favourite pastimes: golf, gardening, woodworking, and fly fishing.
“The occupational therapist,” says Légaré, “built a program to target what I love.”
That’s just what Canada’s occupational therapists enable. These health care professionals help clients who’ve had an injury, disease or disability to improve functions, so they can engage in activities that matter to them.

Working the spectrum
Occupational therapists don’t just address job tasks, but any tasks related to personal care and mobility, leisure, and productivity (work, school, home-making).
Canada’s 13,000 occupational therapists bring their expertise to broad areas of practice, from post-surgery rehabilitation to home modifications.

In demand
Demand for these professionals is rising, reports Kate Rexe, Public Policy

Officer for the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). Given the complexity of diagnoses and recovery plans, educational requirements for the field have grown too. Since 2008, Canadian university programs for occupational therapists must lead to a Master’s credential.
Another major development for the profession, says Rexe, is the Occupational Therapy Examination and Practice Preparation project, known as OTepp. OTepp, which began in 2010, is led by the School of Rehabilitation



“We work in a very culturally-centered and client-oriented form of practice, looking for the best intervention for every possible individual”

Kate Rexe
Public Policy Officer,
The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

tion Science at Hamilton’s McMaster University in partnership with CAOT. This initiative assists internationally-educated occupational therapists as they seek to transition into practice in Canada.

International connections
With the need for more occupational therapists in Canada, OTepp ensures that foreign-trained professionals can meet the standards of practice in this country and find success in the Canadian job market. OTepp includes a series of learning modules, plus the opportunity for field placements.
Rexe suggests that the influx of internationally-educated occupational therapists is positive for the profession as a whole and for clients.

“It brings more diversity to reflect the population that occupational therapists serve,” she says. “We work in a very culturally-centred and client-centred form of practice, looking for the best intervention for each particular individual.”
Ultimately, occupational therapists strengthen skills for the job of living. “They’re artists,” says Légaré, “who make things easier for you to do in day-to-day life according to your priorities - what you’ve lost and can now regain.”
OTepp is funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Foreign Credential Recognition Program and by the Government of Ontario.

STUART FOXMAN
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FACTS

- Occupational therapists (OTs) are regulated health care professionals.
- OTs understand not only the physical limitations of a disability/ injury, but also the social and environmental factors that affect someone’s ability to function.
- OTs help people to participate to their potential in the daily activities of life through learning new ways of doing things; adapting materials or equipment they use; or making changes to their environment.
- Work settings: community and


social agencies, health care organizations (hospitals, chronic care facilities, rehabilitation centres), schools, insurance companies, workers’ compensation boards, home care.
■ Some OTs specialize with specific groups, i.e. people with arthritis, spinal cord injuries, developmental disorders, or mental illnesses.

Read more on the web:
www.caot.ca


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2012 Call for Nominations



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

Deadline for nominations is August 17th at 5 pm EST

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College of Medical
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Public protection through regulation:
Medical laboratory technology professionals

How often has a medical appointment resulted in your doctor saying to you, "I'd like to run a few tests?" Physicians base the majority of their decision-making about diagnoses and treatments on lab tests. How often have you thought about the self-regulated health professionals performing those tests or the quality of the results?

In Ontario, approximately 7700 medical laboratory technologists (MLTs) conduct nearly half a million lab tests each day. Each MLT is a regulated health care professional and together they comprise the fourth largest group of regulated health professionals in Ontario.

The College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO), the governing body for medical laboratory technologists in Ontario, ensures that MLTs meet strict competency and ethical standards, and are held accountable for their conduct and practice. It sets the standards for entry to practice to the profession and investigates complaints regarding the professional conduct of its MLT members. Qualified individuals must be registered with the CMLTO to work as MLTs in Ontario.

CMLTO's role, programs, and governance all contribute to making the medical laboratory technology profession accountable. The CMLTO ensures you can have confidence in the MLTs performing your lab tests and protects your right to safe, high-quality health care through self-regulation of the medical laboratory technology profession.

MLTs may practise in specialized areas like transfusion science (e.g., performing tests associated with tissue and organ transplant), genetics (e.g., studying chromosomes, DNA and RNA from cells of body fluids and tissues to diagnose genetic diseases) and cytology (e.g., studying and identifying normal and cancerous cells). The results from these tests help other medical practitioners diagnose, treat and monitor many medical conditions.

Expected to maintain their competence throughout their careers, MLTs continually enhance their knowledge and skills, and participate in the quality assurance program. They are required to share their knowledge and information with other health care team members, thus enhancing interprofessional collaboration (coordinated patient-centred care provided by diverse health professionals working together).

"Being part of a regulated health profession in Ontario means that legislation, regulations, bylaws, a code of ethics, standards of practice, and practice guidelines collectively establish a framework for our practice and ensures that our work protects the public's right to safe, high-quality health care," says CMLTO Registrar and Executive Director Kathy Wilkie.

MLTs must understand and comply with the professional, legal and ethical requirements governing their practice, including applicable provincial and federal statutes, regulations and agreements.

MLTs who do not maintain the standards of practice may be investigated by the CMLTO's Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee, which may refer the matter to a Panel of the Discipline Committee for a hearing. An MLT may face fines, suspension and/or revocation of his or her right to practise if found to have committed an act of professional misconduct.

The CMLTO exists to ensure the public receives quality laboratory services from competent and ethical professionals. It protects the public's right to safe, high-quality health care through self-regulation of the medical laboratory technology profession.

Learn more about how the CMLTO ensures the quality of the services that MLTs provide in labs throughout Ontario.

Margaret Goulding is the Corporate Communications Specialist at the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO).



For more information, call the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO) at 1-800-323-9672 or visit www.cmlto.com.

Occupational therapy is a respected health profession, dedicated to helping people achieve independence, meaning, and satisfaction in all aspects of their lives.

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists is committed to promoting:

- The success of internationally educated occupational therapists
- Diversity in the profession to reflect the population of Canada



Occupational Therapy examination and practice preparation project for internationally educated occupational therapists



Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
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