

## History of Dialysis Certification

In 1968, the Canadian Society of Extracorporeal Technicians (CANSECT) was formed and Letters Patent were granted by the Government of Canada. From 1968 until 1974, this group consisted of dialysis and heart & lung personnel. These 2 groups separated in 1975 and the dialysis group was called the Canadian Society of Perfusionists (CSP). In 1977, CSP was renamed the Canadian Society of Dialysis Perfusionists (CSDP). This society offered the Dialysis Certification Examination to both nurses and technicians, with a common portion of general areas of dialysis to both groups and the second part of the examination consisted of separate parts according to the specialized area of practice – either clinical or technical. The title awarded to both nurses and techs was CDP. The last exam offered by CSDP was in 1983 and, up to 2003, certification was not available for dialysis technologists.

In the mid 1990's, interest was renewed in dialysis certification for technicians and technologists. The Canadian Nurses Association had developed certification in nephrology (dialysis) nursing and it was felt that the time was right for technical certification to follow. In 1995, the Canadian Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technologists (CANNT) conducted a national survey in which certification was identified as a priority for technical members. In a subsequent national Needs Assessment survey, conducted in 1997, this was reiterated. CANNT supported the process and encouraged its technical members to consider undertaking professional certification. It was with this in mind that a subcommittee was struck to pursue and develop certification with a national scope. This group consisted of interested senior technologists, technical unit managers and dialysis educators. Funding for the project's evolution and on-going operational costs was underwritten by Fresenius Medical Care Canada, a major dialysis manufacturer. This support continues.

Once the time frame for implementation was established, the committee investigated several options at the national and provincial levels. We joined the Ontario Association for Certified Engineering Technicians/Technologists in 2003 to implement the certification program. Guiding documents (Terms of Reference, Core & Supporting Competencies, Exam Blueprint and Exam Question Bank) were developed and vetted at several levels. Initially the designation CNephT (Certified Nephrology Technologist), was issued, however, the title was repealed when the Canadian Nurses Association argued that the title was too close to one used for certified nephrology nurses – CNephC. At this point the designation cdt (Certified Dialysis Technologist) was implemented and trademarked for our use. The OACETT certification program ran with modest numbers until 2008 when, after much deliberation and mutual consent, it was felt that since the "cdt" is a national and not a provincial designation, the interests of the membership could best be served by a national organization. The Technical Certification Committee, therefore, explored new avenues for national level certification.

The Canadian Board of Examiners for Biomedical Engineering Technologists and Technicians has invited our technical members to seek dialysis certification through their national infrastructure. CBE-BMET's executive has worked with our team to harmonize processes and documentation. While final approval through the International Certification Commission (ICC) is pending, we feel comfortable with our decision and confident that certification can once again be offered.

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