
Summary of the Town Hall from the Regulated Profession and Advocacy Subcommittee

Submitted by Dr. Paul Yip, CSCC President

The regulation of clinical biochemists has been an important topic within the CSCC in recent years, and the current status of regulation is described in detail in the July 2023 newsletter. Although time was allocated for a town hall during the annual conference in Winnipeg, it would not have done justice for input from members while also missing the voices of those who could not attend. As a follow-up, a town hall was held over Zoom on September 28, 2023 to engage CSCC members on their questions and comments regarding professional regulation.

To start the session, Allison Venner, CSCC Past-President, provided the background to regulation and the potential implications to professional practice for clinical biochemists. Also highlights from collaboration with other clinical laboratory doctoral scientists and provincial activities were shared by Curtis Oleschuk (Clinical Laboratory Sciences Working Group), Mari DeMarco (BC), Lawrence de Koning (AB), and Dana Bailey (ON). The second half of the town hall was an open discussion with the presenters serving as panelists while ample participation came from the audience.

Three questions were put forward and the first was a poll asking, *Do you agree on the need and value for the regulation of clinical biochemists?* A clear YES came from 80% of the audience of 60 members on hand.

Question #2: *Do you have suggestions on how clinical biochemists can be more effective at achieving regulation?* Hiring a lobbyist to bring forward changes to elected officials who can introduce legislation was necessary at the provincial level. However, the route can be expensive and the success is highly dependent on political climate and competing legislative priorities. Another essential effort is making the profession more recognized in the public eye, which must go beyond what is currently known about the CSCC. This calls for evidence of how the patient *and* public are directly impacted by clinical doctoral scientists having specialized training with high standards for individual conduct and accountability for decision making in healthcare.

Question #3: *Do you see benefit (or harm) to working with other professional organizations through national (e.g. CSCC) and/or provincial groups (e.g. BCACS, AACLDS, OSCC)?* Given the relatively small numbers of clinical biochemists, joining similar groups such as geneticists, microbiologists, or physicists may be fruitful but also necessary in sharing this common purpose as healthcare professionals. Many would agree that we are often mistaken as technologists or research scientists – but that is clearly not the case. However, being regulated may require certification before clinical employment, which has implications for examination process or restrictions on working independently.

For further information, a new webpage with members-only access is available on the CSCC website. Just log-in and a link to “Town Hall” can be found on your profile dashboard. A recording and transcript of the town hall is available along with related resources. The Subcommittee continues to meet bimonthly and share updates with the CSCC membership.