



PRENATAL SCREENING PROGRAM  
PROGRAMME DE DÉPISTAGE PRÉNATAL

# NTQA UPDATE

## Background

Since its introduction to Ontario, NT ultrasound, as a part of provincial 1st trimester screening for chromosome anomalies, has been without a formal quality assessment (QA) program. As a result, sonographer performance has degraded over time. To account for the wide range of sonographer performance, the Ontario Multiple Marker Screening (MMS) labs have been developing and updating “sonographer-specific curves” to adjust the NT values submitted by each sonographer to bring systematically under or over measured NT values closer to the Fetal Medicine Foundation normative curve.

Prenatal Screening Ontario at the Better Outcomes Registry and Network (BORN) Ontario has been mandated to develop and implement a QA program for NT measurements as part of the 1st trimester prenatal screening program. This initiative will require the assistance and input of many individuals, associations, and boards to ensure the NTQA Program is robust and sustainable, and also to generate engagement of the sonographer community.

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## NTQA Goals

- To support the ultrasound community in improving 1st trimester screening performance
- To work closely with the MMS labs to ensure accurate and reliable screening results
- To provide Ontario with excellent obstetrical screening

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## Current Initiatives

- Raise awareness and educate the ultrasound community on the status of NTQA in the province and PSO's developing NTQA program.
  - Finish registering all Ontario NT sonographers in the BORN Information System (BIS). ~ 1400 sonographers are registered in the BIS to date. Systems developed for identifying sonographers who have not registered or logged in to view their curve/update their contact details. Currently, the PSO Ultrasound Clinical Content Specialist (CCS) is contacting those sonographers.
  - Working with various stakeholders on the documentation needed to guide the development of the NTQA program and enforce its evolving requirements.
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## Recent Activity

- Prenatal Screening Ontario (PSO) gave a webinar hosted by the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences (OAMRS) to educate sonographers about NTQA and the BORN registration process. ~240 sonographers signed up for the talk.
- PSO presented at the Wavelengths symposium that highlights completed research, quality improvement projects, and practice innovations in medical imaging. The Michener Institute of Education in Toronto hosted the event (April 26–27, 2019).
- PSO gave a webinar hosted by the Ontario Association of Radiology Managers (OARM) to inform radiology managers on how the NTQA program will affect their staff and practice.
- The PSO website is being redesigned. Website mapping meeting held in March 2019. Initiatives underway to make the interface, the performance curves, and the registration process more accessible to sonographers.
- Working with the MMS labs to establish standard operating procedures that will methodize how sonographers are identified as requiring remediation. Remediation services continue to be offered by the PSO Ultrasound Clinical Content Specialist (CCS) to those sonographers demonstrating urgent performance indicators.

## Next Steps

- PSO will present a webinar hosted by Sonography Canada (June 26, 2019 at 12 PM Eastern Time) to educate sonographers about NTQA and the BORN registration process.
- A campaign will be launched to educate the ultrasound community on NT ID number sharing and the negative effect that it has on personalized performance curves and patients' prenatal screening results.



## Get Involved!

If you have any questions or comments regarding NTQA in the province, please reach out to Prenatal Screening Ontario at [PSO@bornontario.ca](mailto:PSO@bornontario.ca)



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**Watch for our next  
issue: Fall, 2019**