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Sonography Canada

Summary of Bylaw Changes October 2019

During the 2019 Sonography Canada Annual General Meeting on May 25th, 2019, Active Sonography Canada members were asked to vote on a motion to change the association's bylaws to allow for a new, more expansive membership model. As presented, that model would have allowed all practicing sonographers to become Active members of the organization – those with Sonography Canada credentials, those with credentials from another approved credentialing body, those registered with a regulatory body, and those with no credentials or registration status at all.

The motion was defeated. Members instructed the Board of Directors to make a few amendments and return to the membership with a revise proposal. Areas of concern were:

- Allowing individuals without any type of credential or who are unregulated to become a member of Sonography Canada
 - Waiving Sonography Canada's CPD requirements for these non-credentialed, unregulated individuals
- Concerns that opening the door to non-credentialed, unregulated sonographers would lower, rather than elevate professional practice standards
 - Concerns that this group of sonographers, although likely small, would have some influence in the direction of the organization, and could possibly impact current rates of Sonography Canada's professional liability insurance.

This document summarizes further, post-AGM revisions to Constitution and Bylaws that reflect members' concerns.

Background

Sonography Canada is working in a different context than in the past. The profession of sonography is now regulated in both Quebec and Ontario, with regulation expected to take place in other provinces in the coming months or years. With regulation comes increased demand for professional liability insurance (PLI), which regulators require and which many unregulated sonographers seek, as well as continuing professional development (CPD). Sonography Canada now also faces competitive challenges for these member services.

At the same time, the cost of annual registration fees levied by the provincial regulator and the absence of a requirement to maintain Sonography Canada credentials may prevent sonographers from maintaining their Sonography Canada membership. This means that the ability of the organization to continue to offer, and indeed enhance, programs and services that support sonographers' practice becomes more challenging.

Within this context Sonography Canada must move to protect and strengthen the organization so that there is a strong voice specifically dedicated to sonographers in Canada. **Sonography Canada proposes to broaden membership to welcome practitioners from within the entire profession rather than limiting membership to those holding a Sonography Canada credential.**

Historically, membership has coupled with the Sonography Canada credential. There have been grandfathering periods prior to 2014 during which sonographers with credentials from other approved credentialing bodies could receive an equivalent Sonography Canada credential without completing Sonography Canada's entry-to-practice requirements. Then, in 2018, Sonography Canada changed its bylaws to enable anyone registered with a provincial regulator to become a member (Active Non-Credentialed) so that they could purchase PLI and participate in the continuing professional development programs mandated by the regulatory college. This opened the door partway to membership by any practicing sonographer.

Now, the proposed changes to the membership model and subsequently the Constitution and Bylaws presented here, will open that door further, so that practicing sonographers can become members, regardless of what credentials, if any, they may hold **as long as they fulfill specific requirements relative to their member category**. These pertain to continuing professional development, voting, volunteering and the ability to purchase Sonography Canada's comprehensive Professional Liability Insurance.

The rationale for Sonography Canada taking this next step include:

- ***Becoming the genuine voice of the profession***: The Sonography Canada mission statement includes being "the Canadian voice of medical sonographers," and the 2019-2022 strategic plan proposes that the organization take a stronger role as an advocate for sonographers in the workplace. If the organization only extends membership to a subset of practicing sonographers, it is more difficult to assert being a credible, legitimate general voice of the profession.
- ***Protect membership***: There are concerns that regulation could decrease membership. This membership change would enable Sonography Canada to communicate with, engage and recruit more sonographers as potential members. There is some indication from member and non-member research that there is interest in Sonography Canada membership that does not require obtaining a Sonography Canada credential. It is believed that most of those sonographers have credentials from ARDMS or CCI.
- ***Develop professional practice among all sonographers***: Sonography Canada's mission also includes "fostering best practices and promoting the pursuit of excellence." Changing the membership model enables Sonography Canada to bring a wider range of practitioners into the organization so they are exposed to and have the opportunity to develop their professional practice. Given that the spread of regulation is likely to create significant challenges to provincial sonography organizations (where they exist at all), Sonography Canada is the only organization that can play this role nation-wide.
- ***Streamline and simplify***: The new membership model is more straightforward to understand and explain, meaning back-end processes and member-facing communications can be simplified.

The Board directed the revisions to the membership model following the Annual General Meeting. As a result, the Constitution and Bylaws have been again updated to reflect the shift.

To assist in your review of the proposed Bylaws, the following are the most important of the proposed changes:

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ARTICLE 3.1 DEFINITIONS

Removed: “Active Credentialed Members means an individual defined in Article 4.2.2

Revised: “**Active Member**” means an individual who is either an Active Credentialed member or Active Non-Credentialed members as defined in Article 4.2 herein;

To: “**Active Member**” means an individual as defined in Article 4.3.2.1 herein;

Removed: Active Non-Credentialed members means an individual defined in Article 4.2.3

Rationale:

- Reflect Sonography Canada as an association welcoming those holding Sonography Canada credentials, and/or credentials such as ARDMS, and/or registered with a provincial regulator
- Decoupling of *membership* from *credential* going forward reflecting the need to evolve to a “society”, representing and supporting all sonographers in Canada rather than strictly a credentialing body

CPD Policy:

From:

“CPD Policy” means the policy established and from time-to-time amended by the Board of Directors with respect to continuing professional development requirements for maintaining an Active Member’s membership in Good Standing

To:

“CPD Policy” means the policy established and from time-to-time amended by the Board of Directors with respect to continuing professional development requirements for maintaining an individual’s Sonography Canada credentials, or for maintaining membership in the case of those in the Practicing Non-Credentialed membership category.

Rationale:

- Reflects the decoupling of membership from the credential whereby only Active members holding Sonography Canada credentials shall be required to uphold Sonography Canada’s CPD requirements, and then only to retain their credential rather than their membership
 - Those Active members who do not hold Sonography Canada credentials are not subject to Sonography Canada’s CPD requirements in order to remain members of Sonography Canada, as it is assumed that they are fulfilling CPD requirements with another approved credentialing body, and/or a provincial regulatory body.
 - Those Practicing Non-Credentialed members MUST fulfill requirements of Sonography Canada’s CPD program

Good Standing

From:

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“Good Standing” means that a Member meets all conditions of their membership category including timely payment of dues and compliance with the CPD Policy, and that the Member is not currently subject to any disciplinary action by the Corporation or by the Member’s provincial regulatory college.

To:

“Good Standing” means that a Member meets all conditions of their membership category including timely payment of dues, compliance with the CPD Policy relative to their membership category, and that the Member is not currently subject to any disciplinary action by the Corporation or by the Member’s provincial regulatory college.

Rationale:

- Fulfilment of the CPD policy is no longer a condition of membership for Active members. A sonographer may be an Active Member without Sonography Canada credentials
- Fulfilment of the CPD requirement is only necessary to retain Sonography Canada credentials NOT a condition of membership
- Fulfilment of the CPD requirement is MANDATORY for Practicing Non-Credentialed members

Definition of “Sonographer”

From:

“Sonographer” means a person qualified in the application of sonographic equipment and techniques for diagnostic medical purposes, whose qualifications have been issued by Sonography Canada, the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography, or other similarly recognized national or international body authorized to issue such qualifications; or a Provincial regulatory body legally authorized to regulate the practice of diagnostic medical sonography.

To:

“Sonographer” means a person qualified the application of sonographic equipment and techniques for diagnostic medical purposes, whose qualifications have been issued by Sonography Canada, the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography, or other similarly recognized national or international body authorized to issue such qualifications; or a Provincial regulatory body legally authorized to regulate the practice of diagnostic medical sonography; *or an individual currently engaged in active sonography practice, education, and/or application of diagnostic medical sonography; this includes clinical practitioners, educators in accredited Diagnostic Medical Sonography training programs, and clinical applications specialists.*

Rationale:

- Enables a broader definition of Active membership

ARTICLE 4: CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

From:

4.2 Voting Member

The Corporation shall have one (1) category of membership with voting rights and up to six (6) categories of membership without voting rights. Conditions of membership for each

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membership category are as described in the Operating Policies and Procedures of the Corporation from time to time.

- 4.2.1 Active Members: Active Credentialed Members and Active Non-Credentialed Members, in good standing, shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend and vote at all meetings of the Members.
- 4.2.2 Active Credentialed Members: Active Credentialed Members shall be Active Members who have Canadian Sonography Credentials.
- 4.2.3 Active Non-Credentialed Members: Active Non-Credentialed Members shall be Active Members who do not have Canadian Sonography Credentials.
- 4.2.4 Active Credentialed Members and Active Non-Credentialed Members must be Sonographers who are active in the practice, education and/or application of diagnostic medical sonography.
- 4.2.5 All Active Non-Credentialed Members must comply with any and all Operating Policies and Procedures in effect from time to time.

To:

- 4.2 The Corporation shall have two (2) classes of membership: Voting and Non-Voting

Added:

4.3 Voting Members

- 4.3.1 Voting Members: The Corporation shall have two (2) categories of membership with voting rights and up to six (6) categories of membership without voting rights. Conditions of membership for each membership category are as described in the Operating Policies and Procedures of the Corporation from time to time.
- 4.3.2 Active Members: Active Members, in good standing, shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend and vote at all meetings of the Members.
 - 4.3.2.1 Active Members shall be professionals who are currently engaged in active sonography practice, education, and/or application of diagnostic medical sonography on a full-time, part-time or casual basis who hold Sonography Canada credentials AND/OR who hold credentials from another approved credentialing body, AND/OR who are registered with a provincial regulatory body; this includes clinical practitioners, educators in Diagnostic Medical Sonography training programs, and clinical applications specialists.
 - 4.3.2.2 The Board shall reserve the right to deny the status of Active Membership to any applicant

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4.3.3 Recent Graduate Members: A Recent Graduate Member shall be a person who has completed a training program for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers accredited by or registered with an accreditation body approved by the Board of Directors within the past 12 months.

4.3.3.1 Recent Graduate Members shall be a person who has completed a training program for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers accredited by or registered with an accreditation body approved by the Board of Directors within the past twelve (12) months.

Rationale:

- Simplifies Voting and non-voting members
- “Active members” reflects the broadening of membership to include practicing sonographers whose credentials or regulatory status denote a responsibility to fulfil continuing professional development requirements
- Reflects the decoupling of *membership* from *credential*
- Recent Graduate members: A new category replacing those formerly known as Graduates members (a non-voting class of member) recognizing that as graduates of accredited programs whether they have completed credentialing examinations or not they have the right to participate in the organization as voting members without credentials
 - Encourages graduates to become involved in the organization
 - Creates a category of member for whom specific services and programming needs may be created

4.4 Non-Voting Members

Removed: Interim Members

Are those Active Credentialed members and those Active Non-Credentialed members whose fees are in arrears for a period of more than 2 months but less than six (6) months or whose status under the Corporation’s CPD Policy is non-compliant

Rationale:

- Deletes this category of member
- The CPD Policy will only apply to credentialed Active members who wish to maintain the right to use the Sonography Canada credential, or a Practicing Non-Credentialed member who wishes to maintain a Sonography Canada membership.
 - A credentialed member who does not comply with CPD requirements and does not wish to retain the credential may still join or renew as an Active member (without Canadian credentials)
- Active Members who have not paid membership dues will become a lapsed member to whom the Corporation will communicate for a period of 180 days

4.4.1 Revised: Associate Members

From:

Shall be a person who was an Active Member in Good Standing immediately prior to becoming an Associate Member, but who no longer meets the employment requirements for Active Member status

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for reasons such as but not limited to retirement or maternity leave or was an Associate Member in Good Standing of the Canadian Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers on December 31, 2013.

To: Inactive Practitioner Members

Shall be an individual who would otherwise be an Active Member, who is not currently working in sonography, which may include those who are retired or seconded to other roles, or otherwise.

Rationale:

- Creates the opportunity for retirees and those no longer practicing sonographers, who are unlikely to return to the profession, but who have an interest in engaging with the organization in a minimal or passive way, to receive information about the organization
 - This category of member would not be eligible to purchase professional liability insurance nor participate in CPD activities

4.4.2 Revised: Accredited Program Members

From: An Accredited Program Member shall be a person who is enrolled in or has graduated from a training program for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers accredited by or registered with an accreditation body approved by the Board of Directors, who has not yet earned a Sonography Canada credential and whose application as an Accredited Program Member has been approved by the Board of Directors.

To: Student Members

A Student Member shall be a person who is enrolled in a training program for Diagnostic Medical Sonographers accredited by or registered with an accreditation body approved by the Board of Directors, whose application as a Student Member has been approved by the Board of Directors.

Rationale:

- Reference to those who have graduated from a training program has been removed given the creation of a new, voting Recent Graduate member category
- Student members will not have written credentialing examinations while attending academic programs, so this has been removed

4.4.5 Added: Practicing Non-Credentialed Members

Professional Non-credentialed Members shall be individuals who are currently engaged in sonography practice, education and/or application of diagnostic medical sonography who do not hold credentials in sonography from Sonography Canada or another industry-approved credentialing body, nor are registered with a provincial regulatory body.

Rationale:

- Creating this membership category aligns directly with Sonography Canada's vision and mission statements:
 - Vision: Sonography is practiced with excellence across Canada
 - We are the Canadian voice of medical sonographers, fostering best practices and promoting the pursuit of excellence

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- Engaging non-credentialed sonographers who are unregulated with a membership offering that includes PLI and access to CPD opportunities has the potential to elevate the practice standards of these individuals,
- It affords Sonography Canada the opportunity to identify, reach and connect with these individuals to promote high standards of practice
- This category **MUST** fulfil Sonography Canada’s CPD requirements to maintain membership

4.4.6 Added: Allied Healthcare Professional

“**Allied Healthcare Professional Member**” shall be an individual who is a licensed, qualified allied healthcare health professional who operates within a scope of practice outside of sonography that includes application of point-of-care ultrasounds to complement and aid their medical diagnostic capabilities.

Rationale:

- The evolution of technology has rendered sonographic equipment more portable and a number of healthcare professionals have begun to use ultrasound to complement and aid their diagnostic capabilities, i.e. nurses, midwives, emergency physicians
- These healthcare practitioners are governed by their own regulatory bodies that have specified parameters for the use of sonography in practice, normally within a limited scope
- These members may have a professional interest in sonography, and may wish to access Sonography Canada’s CPD activities

Article 4.7 Reinstatement

From:

An Active Credentialed Member or an Active Non-Credentialed Member whose active membership has been terminated for any reason, may apply for reinstatement as such by written application to the Corporation in accordance with the Operating Policies and Procedures in effect at the material time

To:

Any Member whose membership has been terminated for any reason, may apply for reinstatement as such by written application to the Corporation in accordance with the Operating Policies and Procedures in effect at the material time.

Rationale:

- Removes references to “credential”
- Reinstatement of the credential does not change. Credential holders must fulfil maintenance requirements
- Reinstatement of membership is not conditional of maintaining a credential but on paying dues and upholding the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 6: ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Article 6.4: Director Eligibility

From:

A Director must satisfy the following pre-requisites in order to be eligible for election:

6.4.1 A Director must be an Active Credentialed Member in Good Standing

To:

6.4.1 A Director must be an Active Member in Good Standing

6.4.2 A Director must have at least one of the credentials issued by the Corporation and must have held this (these) credential(s) for at least 2 years prior to taking office.

Rationale:

- Although the wording changes slightly to be consistent to conditions of membership, the requirement that Directors hold one of the credentials issued by the Corporation remains, and that the Director must have held this (these) credential(s) for a period of two (2) years prior to taking office.

6.5 Director Ineligibility

Added: If a Director fails to maintain his/her Sonography Canada membership

Rationale:

- It is expected that those serving the Board of Directors shall uphold the highest standards of the profession and the Corporation by maintaining their credential(s) and by remaining an Active member of the Corporation

ARTICLE 8: MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

Article 8.3 Quorum

From:

Quorum of any in-person meeting of the Members shall be fifteen (15) Active Members. Quorum of any meeting of the Members conducted entirely by means of a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting shall be ten (10%) percent of the Active Members at the material time.

To:

Quorum of any in person meeting of the Members shall be fifteen (15) Voting Members. quorum of any meeting of the Members conducted entirely by means of a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting shall be ten (10%) percent of Voting Members at the material time.

Rationale:

- Replacing “Active members” with “Voting members” to reflect the Recent Graduates members’ right to vote

Article 8.8 Persons Entitled to be Present at Members Meetings

Add: “and Recent Graduate” to those specified as having the right to be present at any meeting of the members