



## President and Executive Director's message



# Revisiting the OSMT's Strategic Plan

**B**y the time you read this it will be spring but as we write this, it is still deep winter in a cold and blustering January. We have just finished a weekend of meetings where the Board reviewed the results of a survey carried out to explore the potential regulation of laboratory assistants. The Society's position on the regulation of lab assistants is included in this issue of *Advocate*.

During our meetings, we also revisited the strategic plan that the Board committed to a little over a year ago. In this report, we are pleased to provide the membership with an update of the achievements made toward the strategic priorities that had been established.

pads were purchased for distribution to those who participate in OSMT activities. Our branding efforts to build a widely recognizable and distinguished OSMT will continue.

### Enhance member services & develop new products and services

Recognizing that the viability of the OSMT depends upon the Society's ability to offer services and benefits for our membership, the OSMT prides itself on providing a comprehensive package of products. For over a decade, our members have benefited from the provision of Professional Liability Insurance (PLI).

the lack of both funding and time, has been a continuing challenge for many people. In addition, access to quality and appropriate professional development is not always easy to find. Recently, professional development has also been a challenge for the OSMT. With over a dozen sessions and workshops available, why are there so few takers? Are the topics being offered the right ones? Are there continuing education needs that are not being met? This was a hot topic of discussion at the Board meeting last weekend.

Our strategic plan calls for a larger investment of resources to develop accessible, affordable, and topical educational offerings. However, the first step must be to make certain the programs offered reflect the needs of our members. In this respect, we will be polling laboratory staffs through our District Directors and other means to determine just what, where, and how education is needed. Please take a few minutes to provide us with information about your educational requirements by completing the response form on the next page.

On a most encouraging note, a very generous on-going PD grant for MLTs, provided by *HealthForceOntario* of the MOHLTC, is now available. This will help to alleviate financial deterrents to taking PD courses. We wish to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry for this much needed support and recognition of the laboratory profession.

### Serve as the voice of the laboratory profession

An important activity of the OSMT Board has always been to maintain 'checks and balances' for the laboratory profession with stakeholders, government, and regulatory bodies.

Almost half of the OSMT's membership is now comprised of Medical Laboratory

OSMT members will be supplied with a certificate of professional liability insurance coverage each time your annual membership is renewed.

Here is a recap of the strategic priorities that had been identified for focus and some of the initiatives that are being taken to address them.

### Advocate strengthening the unique identity of OSMT membership

As advocates of the laboratory technologists, technicians and assistants in Ontario, it is essential that your professional society present a strong and positive image – an image to which laboratory professionals can anchor with confidence and pride. The process was started with the creation of a brand new logo. Using the new logo, the OSMT *Advocate* publication has been redesigned and a career brochure was written. We unveiled a series of exhibit banners bearing our new look at the 2007 Conference in Toronto. A number of promotional items such as lapel buttons, pocket protectors and mouse

The exceptional value of this benefit and professional responsibility to carry insurance has been somewhat overlooked and perhaps even taken for granted. Beginning on January 1, 2008, the OSMT has secured a new broker for its PLI and Legal Defense insurance. Pottruff and Smith will be available both by phone and at OSMT events to help members understand their coverage. Beginning in 2009, OSMT members will be supplied with a certificate of professional liability insurance coverage each time your annual membership is renewed.

### Develop comprehensive professional development programs

As professionals, all of us understand how critical continuing education is to our abilities to deliver the best health care possible. But the struggle of coping with lab personnel shortages, shift work, and

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Assistants/Technicians and over the past several years there has been active discussion about lab assistants becoming a 'regulated health profession'. In fact, the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario (CMLTO) is taking an active lead in making this come to pass and has filed a request with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to consider this. In preparation for a consultation on this matter, the OSMT sponsored an arms-length survey of those concerned with laboratory issues, including MLTs, MLA/Ts, and key stakeholders. As a result, the OSMT has been able to develop a position statement that helps us communicate the OSMT's reservations about moving ahead with regulation at the present time.

The OSMT continues to send Board representatives to government and stakeholder meetings and consultative sessions. One such recent consultation was called by the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) on *interprofessional collaboration*. This was the beginning of a complex referral that was made to HPRAC by the Minister and one that is expected to continue for some time. The focus of the initial discussions was to address mechanisms to facilitate the establishment of common standards of practice and professional practice guidelines.

### Expand communication initiatives

The Society's strategic plan includes a focused communication map to facilitate the flow of information on matters of interest and importance to laboratory professionals. It was reaffirmed that a larger use of technology will be devoted to communications initiatives. A database of e-mail addresses for our members is being established to facilitate timely and economic communication with our membership. We wish to put well-constructed communication mechanisms in place so that members can have opportunities to become aware of and understand issues that affect them as they occur.

During 2007 National Med Lab Week, the OSMT partnered with the Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories, the Quality Management Program – Laboratory Services, the Clinical Laboratory Management Association, and the College the Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario to purchase time on Global television to air a CSMLS-produced public service announcement themed "*Your Results Matter*". This promotional campaign will be repeated during Med Lab Week in 2008 on the Weather Channel.

At a more personal level, OSMT District Directors will be helping to identify

their districts' educational needs. Feedback is also being sought on the topics for articles in *Advocate*. Please help us by completing the questionnaire.

### Maintain a high standard MLA/T Certification program

The Society has completed the project to update its MLA/T certification program and continues its pledge to maintain an exemplary certification program for the Medical Laboratory Assistants/Technicians of Ontario. Updated Competency Guidelines, the exam Blueprint and materials to support lab assistant training have been developed. The Board continues to nurture the integrity of MLA/T certification and to promote it to employers and other relevant stakeholders. ❖

**REGRETTABLY**, Amir Hobooty-Fard recently tendered his resignation from the OSMT Board of Directors. Elections took place at the April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Board of Directors meeting and we are pleased to announce that Bernard Hartung of Owen Sound, ON has been appointed as OSMT President for the remainder of the term.

## Receive an OSMT mouse pad

The OSMT is developing professional development sessions for MLTs and MLA/Ts. Please specify the educational needs of your laboratory by taking a few minutes to complete our education survey. OSMT members will receive an OSMT mouse pad for completing our education survey! Please be sure to include your member number and address so we can mail your mouse pad. ❖

Ontario Society of  
Medical Technologists

Serving MLTs and MLA/Ts with

- life-long learning
- professional representation
- exclusive benefits

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