

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAMRT-AB urges workforce planning as Alberta expands self-referral for diagnostic imaging

Calgary, AB — July 29, 2026 — Earlier this week, the Government of Alberta announced plans to allow patients to self-refer and pay privately for selected diagnostic imaging examinations, including MRI, CT, X-ray and ultrasound. CAMRT-AB, the Alberta arm of the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) representing nearly 3,000 medical radiation technologists (MRTs) in the province, recognizes the importance of improving timely access to care. However, any policy change of this magnitude must be implemented with careful planning to protect patient safety, maintain system sustainability and ensure the healthcare workforce can meet demand.

Medical imaging is a finite healthcare resource. Across Alberta, MRTs are already working in an environment marked by workforce shortages, increasing imaging volumes and growing wait lists. These pressures are not unique to Alberta; MRTs are in short supply across Canada. Population growth and an aging population are contributing to exploding demand, leading to shortages, recruitment challenges, heavier workloads and, in some communities, reduced local access or service closures. Alberta already faces challenges educating enough MRTs to meet current demands. Clinical placement capacity remains limited, educational programs have not expanded to match the growing need, and employers are competing for a limited workforce.

With these current challenges already facing the profession, expanding a new pathway for patients to access CT, MRI, X-ray and ultrasound without first addressing workforce capacity risks placing additional pressure on an already overburdened system. Even if demand for preventative imaging grows slowly, as the government announcement proposes, the professionals performing these examinations must come from somewhere.

Despite all of this, and the fact that MRTs are central to the delivery of imaging services, the profession has not been directly engaged in any discussions about the operational impact of this change.

“MRTs support the goal of improving access to care, but access cannot be separated from the workforce required to deliver that care safely,” said Kelly Masotti, CAMRT CEO. “Without parallel investment in education, clinical training, recruitment, retention and long-term health human resource planning, this policy risks worsening existing shortages and increasing wait times for all Albertans.”



As Alberta adapts to this new model, CAMRT-AB is calling for ongoing evaluation of imaging utilization, patient outcomes, wait times and workforce capacity. Meaningful reform also requires collaboration with the healthcare professionals responsible for delivering these services. Alberta's MRTs stand ready to contribute practical expertise on imaging appropriateness, radiation protection, patient safety and system capacity so future policy decisions improve care without compromising diagnostic imaging services.

ABOUT US

Medical radiation technologists (MRTs) provide the essential link between compassionate care and the sophisticated medical imaging and therapeutic technologies that underpin modern healthcare. In total, nearly 3,000 technologists are working across Alberta within the medical imaging areas of radiologic technology, nuclear medicine, magnetic resonance, and the practice of radiation therapy.

The Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) is the national professional association and certifying body for radiological, nuclear medicine and magnetic resonance imaging technologists and radiation therapists. CAMRT-AB is the provincial arm of CAMRT, representing and advocating for MRTs in Alberta. www.camrt.ca

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