

CMLTO Practice Improvement Self-Assessment Module (PRISM)

The script below is a verbatim transcript of the 2025 Practice Improvement Self-Assessment Module (PRISM). The topic is **Delegation Concepts for MLTs**.

Introductory slide

Hello and welcome to the 2025 Practice Improvement Self-Assessment Module, or PRISM. PRISM is part of the annual self-assessment section of the Professional Portfolio. It consists of a short video that focusses on a specific professional practice topic followed by five multiple-choice or true/false questions. The responses to the PRISM questions are not assessed by the CMLTO; this exercise is a way for MLTs to test their knowledge on the module's content to identify if there are any opportunities for further learning. If an answer you select is incorrect, you can try again until you get the correct answer. This module is considered complete once the video is viewed and all questions are answered correctly.

PRISM objectives

PRISM is designed to educate MLTs, to share information about a specific topic that affects MLT professional practice, to communicate professional practice updates or new requirements and finally, to provide a resource to support registrants' efforts in maintaining their continued competence.

This year's module focusses on **Delegation Concepts for MLTs**.

Legislation overview

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* ("RHPA") governs all self-regulated health professionals, including medical laboratory technologists (MLTs), and establishes the legislative framework for CMLTO. The RHPA protects the public's right to safe, competent, and ethical health care.

The RHPA describes 14 controlled acts. Controlled acts are specific activities that are authorized to individual professions operating in their scope of practice as it is possible that serious harm may occur, if someone without the knowledge, skill, or judgment were to perform the activity. Health professionals can perform a controlled act, if:

- The act is authorized to them through their own profession-specific Act,
- The act is delegated to them by a health professional who is authorized to perform it, or
- An exception exists.

No single health profession holds exclusive ownership over any of these controlled acts.

In addition to the RHPA, each self-regulated health profession is governed by its own profession-specific act. For MLTs, this is the *Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991* ("MLT Act"). The MLT Act provides information on the profession's scope of practice, which is described as "the performance of laboratory investigations on the human body or on specimens taken from the human body and the evaluation of the technical sufficiency of the investigations and their results." It also describes the controlled act authorized to

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MLTs, which involves taking blood samples either from the vein or by skin pricking. This means that MLTs cannot perform this act unless it is ordered by a prescribed individual, like a physician, and are authorized to delegate it to others.

Orders

There are a few important concepts to understand about delegation. One important concept is an order. An order includes both direct orders and medical directives. A direct order is a specific requirement or direction for a patient based on an authorized healthcare practitioner's assessment. Orders may include prescriptions, requisitions, order sets, and a doctor's note.

A medical directive is a direction given in advance by an ordering authorizer(s) to enable an MLT or other professional with the ability to perform the ordered procedure under specific conditions without direct assessment. Medical directives are always documented and include details such as when it occurs, who has authorized it, contradictions, and the procedure details.

Medical directives enable healthcare professionals who do not have the authority to order tests to perform these tests under certain circumstances. For example, MLTs performing reflex testing are implementing a physician's order under a medical directive. Common examples include ordering an antibody investigation for a positive antibody screen, a gram stain for a positive blood culture, and susceptibility testing for a certain isolated microorganism.

Delegation

Delegation is the process where a regulated health professional, who is authorized to perform a controlled act, gives authority to an individual who is not authorized to perform the procedure. This ensures only qualified professionals are allowed to perform certain procedures while remaining accountable for their actions. For example, if a physician delegates the authorized act of communicating a diagnosis to the MLT, then the MLT can release results directly to a patient. The decision whether to delegate a controlled act should always be made in the best interests of the patient by providing them with access to a qualified individual that is able to perform the procedure or task. Some best practices for delegation procedures to ensure safe and effective patient care include:

- Obtaining informed consent before the act is conducted
- Documenting the delegation and the conditions under which it occurred
- Following the regulations, basic principles, and standards of practice of the professions involved
- Ensuring there are follow-up processes in place to evaluate and monitor the delegated tasks and to address any issues.

Exceptions

The RHPA lists the exceptions related to performing a controlled act. They include:

1. Providing first aid or temporary assistance in an emergency,

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2. Fulfilling the requirements to become a member of a health profession and the act is in their scope of practice and is done under the supervision or direction of a registered professional,
3. Treating a person by prayer or spiritual means,
4. Treating a member of the person's household,
5. Assisting a person with their routine living activities (This is only applicable for listed controlled acts 5 & 6)

If MLTs are not following a delegation procedure, this may be considered an act of professional misconduct. This would include performing an act that they are not permitted to perform.

Interprofessional Collaboration

MLTs and other healthcare professionals are expected to work in collaboration. This includes working together to establish the conditions, requirements, and documentation procedures when an act is being delegated. Interprofessional collaboration in delegation is essential for creating a supportive and efficient healthcare system, where all healthcare professionals' expertise are recognized. It fosters teamwork, mutual respect, and shared accountability, which benefits patients, MLTs, and the healthcare system by enhancing patient-centered care and outcomes. These practices align with the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, both of which emphasize collaboration among healthcare professionals to deliver high-quality patient centered care.

An example of collaboration in delegation is when a physician at a health clinic delegates the controlled act of administering a substance by injection to an MLT. Both the physician and MLT would work together to document the delegation, establish the conditions and boundaries under which it occurs, set follow-up procedures, and ensure the delegation aligns with the standards of practice for both professions.

CMLTO Resources

If you would like to learn more about delegation or interprofessional collaboration the CMLTO has several resources on the website under the QAP resources and MLT Practice Resource sections. We encourage Registrants to contact QAP staff by email if they have any questions or require support in understanding delegation processes, controlled acts, or medical directives. We also encourage Registrants to discuss and review their learnings with their colleagues to facilitate continuous learning on both giving and receiving delegation within the MLT profession.

Summary

The purpose of this module is to educate Registrants about their professional, legal, and ethical requirements related to the delegation of controlled acts. Registrants are encouraged to go to the CMLTO website to access further information related to the resources and documents described throughout this module.

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Resources

Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991

Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991

[CMLTO website](#)

[CMLTO Standards of Practice](#)

[CMLTO Code of Ethics](#)

[CMLTO Delegation Guidelines](#)

[CMLTO Boundaries of Practice Guidebook](#)

[CMLTO Collaboration Guidelines](#)