

## Notice to the Professions

### RSLPs Not Authorized to Teach, Train or Supervise Members of Other Regulated Professions

August 29, 2023

#### The RSLP scope of practice

In British Columbia, the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) and the Medical Practitioners Regulation restrict the practice of medicine except where authorized by law. Medicine is broadly defined to include diagnosing, prescribing for, preventing, or treating any human disease, ailment, deformity, defect, or injury.

The practice of speech language pathology is an exception to this general prohibition for RSLPs, under the Speech and Hearing Health Professionals Regulation. Feeding and swallowing management is part of the scope of practice of RSLPs, although higher-risk aspects of such management require RSLPs to hold one or more Certified Practice (CP) certificates. The practice of speech language pathology does not, however, extend to teaching, training, or supervising members of other regulated professions with respect to their regulated practices, even though their practices may include managing feeding and swallowing disorders, such as dysphagia, as an aspect of their client care.

The scope of practice of RSLPs not extending to the teaching, training, or supervising of members of other regulated professions with respect to their regulated practices is illustrated by the CSHBC Certified Practice & Above Entry Level Practice standard of practice (PDF). The standard states, with respect to activities requiring certified practice certificates: “At present, there is no provision for registrants of CSHBC to train other regulated health professionals in a CP area that has been designated by regulation to registrants of CSHBC. The CSHBC certification programs for CP certificates are profession-specific and the pre-requisites and required body of knowledge are not transferrable to other professions.” This standard was last updated in May 2023.

Each health profession has its own unique set of required knowledge and skills, which may overlap in some ways, but are not interchangeable. RSLPs required to adhere to professional and clinical standards of practice enforced by CSHBC do not practice standards governing other regulated health professionals unless they are also registered as another health professional.

Accordingly, and in addition to scope of practice issues, RSLPs are not competent to teach, train, and supervise clinical feeding and swallowing management as part of the practices of another regulated profession. Further, training a member of another regulated profession may constitute unlawful practice of that other profession where an RSLP is not also a registrant of that other profession.

### Inter-professional collaborative practice

CSHBC acknowledges that inter-professional collaborative practice is vital to quality client healthcare and is an expectation of CSHBC registrants, who may frequently work with inter-professional teams. However, as outlined in the CSHBC Inter-Professional Collaborative Practice standard of practice (PDF), while there are shared or common competencies that overlap across more than one health profession, “this overlap does not necessarily mean interchangeability.”

Inter-professional collaborative practice does not include teaching, training, or supervising members of other regulated health professions how they should deliver client care as part of their own practices. RSLPs may, however, convey how they engage in professional practice as RSLPs, and may present at conferences and workshops on the factual aspects of managing feeding and swallowing disorders.