



**For immediate release**

## **Towards a Sustainable Solution for Imaging Wait times**

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On the surface, the recent CBC article “Horizon health working overtime in March to clear MRI, mammogram backlog” brings the good news that the imaging backlog, exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic, will become dramatically shorter in only a month. The wait times for such medical imaging exams were long before the pandemic, so this is good news for the healthcare system and its patients.

The Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) and its Atlantic arm (CAMRT-ATL) have extensive data showing that the current wait times dilemma, however, comes at the same time as a parallel crisis of extreme fatigue, burnout, and staffing shortages in the MRT profession required to staff this recovery. Specifically, in New Brunswick, the number of MRTs reporting signs of burnout rose by 74% between 2018 and 2021, meaning nearly three quarters (73%) of the workforce now toil through emotional exhaustion.

A profession exhibiting massive burnout is not at a good starting point to take on the workloads of historic proportions coming after this pandemic. Says Jennifer Carey, Manager of CAMRT-ATL, “As an MRT on the front line during the height of the pandemic, I can testify to the selfless dedication of my colleagues to their patients. The plan to reduce a 255-day backlog in just 30 days sounds miraculous, but solutions like this do not come without a cost.”

It is impossible to address wait times and the backlogs in medical imaging without due consideration for the professionals the system relies upon. Systems need to recognize the true threat of working staff until they are overburdened for the sake of improving productivity metrics. Solutions like overtime, extension of working hours and packing more patient exams into the day sometimes overlook the fact that healthcare is delivered by human beings, not machines. These solutions may work in the short-term, but long-term they are doomed to fail.

CAMRT President Marie-Pier Chagnon added: “While CAMRT applauds the MRTs selflessly engaging in the high amount of overtime in the next month, it is our hope that the Government of New Brunswick and the Horizon and Vitalité health networks also engage with professions involved in the delivery of medical imaging, and specifically the MRTs of New Brunswick, to come up with a long-term and sustainable solution to wait times”

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**About CAMRT:** 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-Atlantic (CAMRT-ATL) represents MRTs in the four Atlantic provinces at the provincial and regional levels. Find out more at [camrt.ca](http://camrt.ca).

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