



Advancing Molecular Imaging and Therapy

August 17, 2010

The Honorable Senator Enzi
United States Senate
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Harkin
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Enzi and Harkin,

On behalf of the Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologist Section (SNMITS), we would like to thank you for introducing the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act of 2010 (the CARE Act), S. 3737.

The SNMITS is part of the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) an international scientific and professional organization founded in 1954 to promote the science, technology and practical application of nuclear medicine. Its 17,000 members are physicians, technologists and scientists specializing in the research and practice of nuclear medicine. In addition to publishing journals, newsletters and books, the Society also sponsors international meetings and workshops designed to increase the competencies of nuclear medicine practitioners and to promote new advances in the science of nuclear medicine.

The quality and safety of medical imaging and therapeutic procedures is dependent upon the personnel performing them. Most Americans assume the person performing their x-ray, nuclear medicine scan, or radiation therapy treatment is a competent professional. However, inadequately trained personnel perform medical imaging and therapeutic procedures in many areas of the United States every day. Only 26 states have established standards for nuclear medicine technologists, only 32 states for radiation therapists, and only 38 states license or partially regulate radiologic technologists.

The CARE Act would require those who perform medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures to meet minimum federal education and credentialing standards in order to participate in the Medicare program. Thus, medical imaging procedures, as well as radiation therapy treatments for patients covered under these programs, would need to be performed by personnel meeting these federal standards in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

Under current law, basic training standards are voluntary in some states, allowing individuals to perform radiologic procedures without any formal imaging education. Poor quality images can lead to misdiagnosis, additional testing, delays in treatment, and anxiety in patients, costing the U.S. health care system millions of dollars each year.

Each year thousands of patients undergo advanced medical imaging procedures and therapies. Recently, events of radiation overexposure have been highlighted in the media. While rare, adverse events underscore the need for persistent steps to help make certain patients receive the safest, most appropriate care. Since its founding in 1954, SNM has demanded quality in the form of accreditation and education. This legislation is another important step to assuring safety and quality care for patients.

The legislation is backed by the Alliance for Quality Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, a coalition of 20 radiologic science organizations representing 350,000 imaging technologists, radiation therapists, medical assistants, and others.

We thank you for your efforts and look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue. Should you have any further questions, please contact Cindy Tomlinson, Associate Director, Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs at either ctomlinson@snm.org or 703.326.1187.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hunt
President, SNMTS



Danny Basso
Chair, SNMTS Advocacy Committee