

CARE bill gaining sponsors in House

It's been nearly a year since Rep. Heather Wilson introduced H.R. 1011, the Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence (CARE) bill.

We now have 45 cosponsors out of the 435 members in the House of Representatives, and are very close to having a companion bill introduced in the Senate.

If you haven't already contacted your lawmakers asking them to support this important federal minimum standards initiative, now is the time to do it and ASRT has put into place a tool to make this even easier.

From ASRT's e-advocacy site located in the "members only" section of ASRT's website (www.asrt.org), you can log in and email members of Congress from your desktop. The e-advocacy site has links to your lawmakers, information on issues important to the profession (like the CARE bill), form letters and talking points for you to use. Logging in is easy; select "contact your legislator" from the menu bar, enter your six-digit ASRT member number as your "user name" and your social security number (in the xxx-xx-xxx format with dashes) as your "password." Since you're an ASRT member, you don't have to register to use the e-advocacy site.



RT in DC

Four members of the MSRT delegation met with Rep. Joanne Amerson, a cosponsor of the CARE bill, when they traveled to Washington, D.C. March 12 to lobby Congress at the fourth annual "RT in DC" event. They attended a full day of seminars and meetings about the legislative process, the situation in DC, the status of the CARE bill, and pointers for lobbying on Capitol Hill. They also visited both Missouri senators and five representatives' offices. Both Senate offices showed interest in the bill, which should be introduced in the Senate by Sen. Kennedy in the near future. Nearly 100 radiologic technologists along with 120 radiologists lobbied Congress on issues facing the medical imaging and radiation oncology communities, such as the CARE bill, access to mammography services and reimbursement policies. It's time to bring lawmakers' attention to the issues that impact you by voicing your support for the CARE bill.

Do you care about CARE? See related stories, page 3

To send an email to your representative asking her or him to cosponsor the CARE bill click on "House - Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence Bill" and follow the prompts.

Congress needs to hear from

radiologic technologists that the CARE bill is an important step towards guaranteeing that all of America's patients receive safe, high-quality radiologic health care. Email your congressman today!

Christine Lung, ASRT

More students enrolling in radiologic science programs, ASRT survey shows

There finally is a rare bright spot among all the bleak news about the shortage of radiologic technologists. According to the results of a recent survey by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, the number of people entering radiologic science programs has increased during the past three years.

The survey asked directors of every accredited radiologic science program in the United States—590 radiography programs, 110 nuclear medicine programs and 86 radiation therapy programs—to report student enrollment figures for their freshman classes during each of the past three years. Response rate varied by program type, with 75 percent of radiography program directors responding, 62 percent of nuclear medicine program directors responding, and 60 percent of radiation therapy program directors responding. The enrollment figures reported by respondents were extrapolated to estimate the entire population of students entering radiologic science programs in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

“The results give us a good snapshot of the supply side of the supply-demand balance in radiologic technology,” said Sal Martino, ASRT executive vice president and chief academic officer.

Survey results showed that enrollments increased for all three types of programs. The freshman class of radiography students was estimated to total 12,529 in 2001, up 12.3 percent from an estimated 11,160 students in 2000 and up from 10,582 students in 1999. The number of students entering U.S. nuclear medicine programs increased 29.1 percent in 2001 to an estimated total of 1,252, up from 970 students in 2000 and from 922 students in 1999. Students entering radiation therapy programs in 2001 were estimated at 860, a 22.3 percent increase from 701 students in 2000 and up from

556 students in 1999.

“This is good news for the profession and for its patients,” said ASRT President Allen Terrell, M.S., R.T.(R)(MR). “I hope this growth correlates with recent efforts by the ASRT and the Summit on Radiologic Sciences and Sonography to interest students in careers in radiologic technology and to help schools recruit more people into their programs.” The ASRT has conducted an extensive media campaign to inform the public about job opportunities in the field, and the Summit recently produced a videotape about careers in radiologic technology.

Many health professions are experiencing shortages, including nurses and laboratory technologists. However, recent reports indicate that shortages are deepest among pharmacists and radiologic technologists. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the country will need 55,000 more radiographers, 4,000 more nuclear medicine technologists and 4,000 more radiation therapists by 2008. Based on those figures, Mr. Terrell warned that the profession is not out of the woods yet. “To avoid a severe personnel crisis, we must continue promoting the field to young people and keep these enrollment figures up,” he said.

The ASRT survey also questioned program directors about their plans for

future program growth. Only 1.3 percent of respondents said they planned to decrease enrollments, while 64.3 percent planned to stay at about the same enrollment level and 34.4 percent said they plan to increase enrollments.

In addition, 93.6 percent of program directors who responded said that their programs “will definitely continue to operate” during the next few years, while 5.2 percent reported that there is a possibility of their program closing and 1.3 percent said that they will close or have already closed.

Radiography programs had the highest student attrition rate, according to the survey. Directors reported that during the past few years, 21.7 percent of students enrolled in radiography programs dropped out before graduating. The attrition rate for radiation therapy programs was 18.1 percent and the rate for nuclear medicine programs was 11.8 percent.

“Attrition continues to be a problem,” said Dr. Martino, who suggested that programs become more flexible to meet the needs of their students. “Offering night and weekend classes or distance-learning programs may be one way to stem the loss of students,” he said.

The enrollment trends survey is available at the ASRT Web site, www.asrt.org.

Check out website

Where should you go if you want the latest MSRT news? The MOSRT website, of course! For all MSRT information, check out www.msrt.org

If you have news for the website, send it to Anne Rutz by e-mail or snail mail. *Note: Items are added to the site at the discretion of the Board.*

MSRT
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Contacting Capitol Hill offices after 9/11

Want to reach a House or Senate office with your legislative message? It's a difficult task these days. Here are the pros and cons of each option.

By Mail

This, for now, is the worst way to reach members of Congress. Individual letters are delayed a week or more. (The process it goes through before it arrives makes it look like it was buried for several years)—hardly the best way to present your information.

District Mail

Sending a letter for a staffer in Washington by way of this office usually results in a delay. Some offices will fax a letter to Washington, but most will send them by US mail.

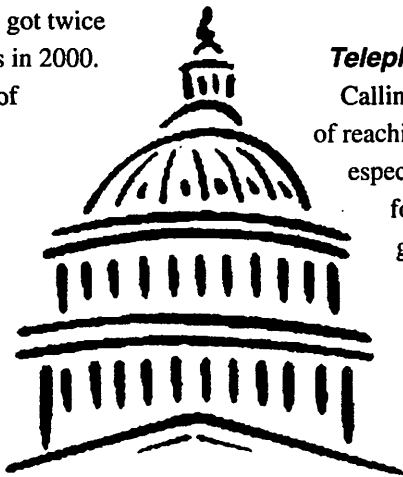
By Fax

If you have the number, you can usually get through, but expect lots of re-dials. Use this method only if the staffer asks for information by fax, and be sure to send it with a cover sheet indicating the person to whom it is addressed.

By Email

Members of Congress got twice as many emails in 2001 as in 2000. But because of the speed of delivery, this is often how they prefer to receive information.

How are they handling the increase in email traffic? Most offices only answer messages from constituents. they'll know you are one if you include your address and phone number (with area code) at the end of the email. Be sure to type this information at the bottom of the message, flush left, without formatting



Telephone

Calling remains the best means of reaching Capitol Hill offices, especially if you are pressed for time. Calls from grassroots lobbyists in the district/state get the most attention, but expect to get the staffer's voice mail. Leave a brief message and get to the point quickly. State your name, city of residence, and your issue or bill number. It also helps if you indicate whether you need a call back that day, or if tomorrow would be sufficient.

By Web

A recent survey by the Congressional Management Foundation revealed that staffers are increasingly relying on special interest group websites for policy information, and want better websites from those groups. In particular, they want special sections on those sites targeted to their needs.

When staffers visit your website, will they easily find information? Are your fact sheets up-to-date? If the staffers need additional information, will they easily find the name, email address and phone number of a person to contact?

*Bob McLean
rem legislative services, inc.*

Did you know...?

(Statistics: Missouri Department of Health)

The following facilities have registered their x-ray machines:

Hospitals—145
Clinics—1,033
Chiropractic officers—707
Podiatrist offices—131
Misc. (Nursing homes/mobile)—105
Total facilities registered—2,121

Persons performing the radiologic examinations:

Registered Technologists:
in hospitals—1,688
in clinics—1,118
Total registered technologists—2,806

Non-registered persons:

in clinics—1,215
in chiropractic officers—77
in podiatrist offices and misc.—1,505

So... 35% of all persons performing radiology on registered equipment in the state of Missouri are not registered/qualified. And 52% of all exams performed in clinics are performed by non-registered/qualified persons. It is scary and appalling!

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ASRT named to 2002 national honor roll by Associations Advance America

The American Society of Radiologic Technologists has been named to the 2002 Associations Advance America Honor Roll, a national awards competition sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives.

Based in Albuquerque, N.M., the ASRT is a professional membership association that represents more than 95,000 radiologic technologists nationwide. The ASRT received the award for a program it undertook in 2001 to raise awareness about careers in radiologic technology. Components included production of a 28-minute videotape about the profession that was distributed to high schools nationwide; development of a brochure that describes career opportunities in the field; and an extensive publicity campaign that resulted in coverage reaching more than 5 million Americans.

The United States is experiencing a severe shortage of radiologic technologists; they are the scarcest of all hospital employees, according to a recent survey by the American Hospital Association and three other hospital organizations. The survey shows the vacancy rate for radiologic technologists is 15.3 percent, compared to 13 percent for registered nurses and 12.7 percent for pharmacists.

"To ensure quality patient care, the nation must recruit and educate more radiologic technologists," said ASRT Chief Executive Officer Lynn May. "Through the ASRT's efforts, millions of Americans learned that radiologic technology is a great career offering a positive job outlook, stability and opportunity. As a result, the number of inquiries from people wanting to learn more about the profession has increased, as has the number of people

enrolling in programs to study radiologic technology."

The Associations Advance America awards program, now in its 12th year, recognizes associations that contribute to American society through innovative projects in education, skills training, knowledge creation, citizenship, standards-setting and social innovation.

"The ASRT's program is a perfect example of how associations play a vital role in helping the nation adapt to complex and changing times," said Michael S. Olson, president of the American Society of Association Executives, in announcing the ASRT's election to the

Associations Advance America Honor Roll. "It is an honor and an inspiration to showcase this activity as an example of the many contributions associations are making to advance American society."

■ Share your news with friends!

If you have news of your district, please share it with your district representative! We want to know what's going on in your area. Be sure to include dates, times, and locations of upcoming seminars. The more notice, the better turnout you'll have!
