Welcome!
Welcome to the new version of the Legislative Review newsletter. The newsletter has been revitalized and modernized to bring you additional information about the grass-roots efforts of the ASRT and how you can make a difference!

The Legislative Review will be posted on the ASRT Web site quarterly with articles written by the Committee on R.T. Advocacy, a group of ASRT members who are leaders in advocating for the medical imaging and radiation therapy profession. Learn from them how easy it is to build a relationship with your state and federal lawmakers and how you, too, can become a leading advocate.

Enjoy the articles, follow the advice and dedicate yourself to quality patient care. We hope the newsletter will encourage you to get involved. Be informed. Be active.

Sincerely,

Christine J. Lung, CAE
Director of Government Relations
American Society of Radiologic Technologists

The Importance of Volunteering
Sharon Wartenbee, R.T. (R)(BD), CDT
South Dakota

Have you ever thought about volunteering for the betterment of your profession? Everyone can admit to being busy, overworked and stressed. But at some point, you become passionate and the time is right for volunteering. Volunteerism is essentially the willingness to work on behalf of others without financial gain. A volunteer can make a difference by contributing time, energy and talent. You recognize the need and then fill it.

This is where the ASRT Grass-roots Network plays an important and vital role in our quest for achieving federal minimum education standards. Since the CARE bill was introduced in Congress more than 10 years ago, it has been the volunteer grass-roots people who have helped move this bill forward. Volunteers have attended R.T. in D.C. and felt the passion. Making visits to Capitol Hill to see your congressman or legislative health aide is an exciting experience. Even if you never have had the opportunity to attend this advocacy event, your commitment makes a difference. Call the ASRT Government Relations Department at 800-444-2778, Ext. 1322, and sign up to become a member of the ASRT Grass-roots Network. You also can Join the Grass-roots Network by double-clicking on this link. It is free and it keeps you informed on the progress of the CARE bill. You will receive e-mails that you can relay to your colleagues and friends. Also, you can make phone calls to your representatives and senators asking them to support the CARE bill. You are the constituent — your representatives work for you and should listen to you! It might sound intimidating and scary making that first phone call, but most of the people answering the phone are college students getting political experience. They enjoy talking to a friendly constituent. You might even make a new friend.

I am speaking from experience. I have enjoyed every minute of my volunteer involvement and have made many new and wonderful friends. Because I live in a state that does not require education or competency testing for individuals using ionizing radiation, it is my personal goal to work toward federal minimum education standards.
Your help is needed. Reach out to your fellow technologists and spread the word. Start tomorrow and become a volunteer. You can change the world!

Sharon Wartenbee, R.T. (R)(BD), CDT

South Dakota

Why Your Vote Counts in November

Christine J. Lung, CAE  
ASRT Director of Government Relations

If there ever was an example of why every vote counts, it was the 2000 presidential election that was decided by the slimmest margin in the history of the United States. This smallest of margins set our country on a pathway that affects every person, patient and radiologic technologist. In November, America will select a new path to follow, and health care will be at the top of the agenda.

Every day radiologic technologists go to work in a wide variety of health settings taking care of patients. The candidate we elect not only will set policy for those seeking health care, but also will set policy for those providing it.

According to the American Medical News, the presidential candidates have charted their course for lowering health care costs, increasing health care quality and maximizing health information technology, all of which directly affect radiologic technologists. Below is a synopsis contrasting the candidates.

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<td>Health Care Costs</td>
<td>Change Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement to pay for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination, but not preventable errors. Support access to walk-in clinics. Eliminate lawsuits against physicians and providers who follow clinical guidelines and safety protocols. Require full transparency about quality and costs.</td>
<td>Require federally paid plans to use proven disease-management programs. Support care coordination and medical home programs. Require full transparency about quality and costs.</td>
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<td>Health Care Quality</td>
<td>Increase federal research on chronic disease treatments. Facilitate the development of national standards for measuring diseases and outcomes.</td>
<td>Require providers to collect and report measures of health costs and quality including preventable errors, hospital-acquired infections and disparities in care. Create an institute to guide reviews and research on comparative effectiveness.</td>
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<td>Health Information Technology</td>
<td>Support the implementation of health information systems to allow providers to practice electronically across state lines and deliver care less expensively.</td>
<td>Spend $50 billion over the next five years to foster widespread adoption of standards-based electronic health information technology.</td>
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Source  
www.johnmccain.com  
www.barackobama.com

In addition to the presidential race, every seat in the U.S. House of Representatives is up for election as well as
Senate seats in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. The composition of the 111th Congress in January 2009 will have a profound effect on many health care issues including the progress of the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, or CARE bill. To find out if your federal legislator is a CARE bill cosponsor, go to www.asrt.org/content/GovernmentRelations/CAREBill/cosponsors.aspx.

ASRT’s message to its grass-roots network members during this election season is to VOTE! As Americans and radiologic technologists, it’s important to exercise your hard-earned rights to vote for the candidates of your choice on Nov. 4.

Preparing for R.T. in D.C.
Gary L. Duehring, Ph.D., R.T.(R)(MR), CRA, FAHRA, Michigan

If you are planning your first trip to the R.T. in D.C. advocacy event in Washington D.C. to speak to your elected legislators concerning the CARE bill, there are some things you need to prepare.

First, be sure you know the topic you are going to discuss. Be aware of what it will do, what it will cost the government and why we need your lawmaker’s support on this piece of legislation. After your visit, plan on the office legislative assistant on health issues to look to you as the expert on this bill.

- Know the bill number (H.R.xxxx or S.xxxx) and use this in all your communications.
- Know your representatives’ or senators’ historic stance on health issues.
- You will only have about 15 minutes with each member of congress or more likely his or her legislative assistant. Practice saying your talking points and stay focused on the issue.
- Be truthful and factual. If you don’t know the answer to a question, let your legislator know that and tell him or her that you will find the answer or put them in contact with someone who has the answer.

Second, set up a “rap” sheet on each member from your state and have their specific information:

- Address of their offices (at home and in D.C.).
- Phone numbers of their offices.
  - Place the D.C. phone number in your cell phone to permit communication between meetings to make sure things are still on time.
  - Know the name of the staffers you communicate with.
- Documentation of the communications you’ve had with the office staff so you can recall conversations and personalize your meeting.
  - It’s a good idea to call the office scheduler to set up an appointment. More than likely you will be asked to submit a request by e-mail, but a call first will alert the scheduler to look for a request and allow you to introduce yourself.
  - Do this about 30 days prior to the date you will be in Washington. If it’s too early, they will not commit a date and time for you. If it’s too late, you will miss out on the opportunity.
- Bring this rap sheet with you to D.C. and review it just prior to each appointment. Asking for individuals by name goes a long way in developing a pleasant relationship. Remember, you are planning on a long-term relationship!

Third, try to schedule your meetings close together with legislators in the same office buildings to limit your travel between each meeting and use your time more efficiently.

- Remember that the House offices are on one side of Capitol Hill and the Senate offices on the other. Schedule your Senate visits one after the other.
  - Lunches on the Senate side are much more relaxing and the cafeterias are more appealing. (Just my opinion.) Visiting with one Senator prior to lunch and one after lunch would work great!

Fourth, take a notepad with you. Write down questions and issues. These notes will help you when you are
preparing your ASRT report and will remind you of the follow-ups you promised.

**Fifth**, plan on having fun and developing a feeling of being part of history!

See you there,

Gary L. Duehring, Ph.D., R.T.(R)(MR), CRA, FAHRA
Michigan

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**Encroachment into the Radiologic Zone: Physician Assistants**

*Peter Shams-Avari*  
ASRT Health Policy Manager

You reside in a state that licenses radiologic technologists. This law is a good law. It has real testing requirements and continuing education requirements. The law recognizes the Registry for licensure by endorsement. Finally, the law is crystal clear that other health care providers with the exception of physicians and chiropractors may not perform radiologic procedures on people. All seems well, right? Not so fast!

Laws can be changed. Do not think for a moment that other professions are not looking to expand their scopes of practice. Last year we learned that the physician assistants association expressed a desire to have their profession granted the same blanket exemptions from the radiologic technology licensing laws that physicians in general have. The American Association of Physician Assistants’ Web site advocates the virtues of using a physician assistant in radiology departments. See [www.aapa.org/gandp/radiology.html](http://www.aapa.org/gandp/radiology.html)

The ASRT opposes encroachment by others into our profession. The ASRT position on who can perform diagnostic radiography procedures sums it up succinctly:

> **“Qualifications for Performing Diagnostic Radiography**
> Only radiologic technologists credentialed in radiography by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) or equivalent are qualified to perform diagnostic radiography examinations and procedures.
> Adopted by the House of Delegates, Resolution 03-3.07, 2004
> Reviewed February 2005.”

The foremost concern regarding physician assistant encroachment into our profession is whether physician assistants have enough radiation safety training. From its Web page advocating for physician assistants to perform medical imaging exams, is this statement: “The rigorous curriculum consists of classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical and behavioral sciences (such as anatomy, pathophysiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine and clinical diagnosis). The didactic year is followed by clinical rotations in internal medicine, family practice, general surgery and surgical subspecialties, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry and geriatrics. PA education promotes the development of practical skills in clinical problem solving and decision making.” ([www.aapa.org/gandp/radiology.html](http://www.aapa.org/gandp/radiology.html)) Notice what is NOT mentioned. Radiation safety.

There have been draft regulatory proposals that have included exemptions for physician assistants and there is a possibility that at least one state will see a bill introduced in 2009 to grant blanket exemptions from the radiologic technology certification requirements for physician assistants.

What can be done? First, each radiologic technologist needs to be aware of what is happening in his or her state. ASRT tracks and monitors state legislation, but often the information is available locally before we hear about the measure. Additionally, committee hearings may get scheduled with very little advanced notice. ASRT can help in developing strategies and tactics for defeating bills seeking to allow encroachment into the profession. We can assist with communication to radiologic technologists in your state to encourage them to contact their state legislators.

Another possible step to take may be to assist in introducing and passing radiologist assistant legislation. The
A radiologist assistant is an advanced practice radiologic technologist who receives specialized education and clinical experience in several advanced areas. Physician assistant advocates make a compelling point about the advantages an advanced practice health care provider presents for the radiologist. Imagine how a radiologist might be better served with an advanced practice radiologic technologist. With radiologist assistants licensed in a state, permitting physician assistants to perform radiologic examinations would be duplicative and unnecessary.

The best preventative measure, however, occurs in the daily activities of the radiologic technologist. Engage your coworkers and colleagues in the other allied health professions. Let others know exactly what you do and the steps you take to acquire the best image possible using the least amount of radiation. In your discussions with others, take any opportunity you can to talk about the effects of radiation. Talk about your schooling and what you have learned. The more others in health care know about what radiologic technologists do, the better. It then becomes harder for others to easily dismiss their lack of radiation safety education.

Being ever vigilant and informed are essential to protecting professional radiologic technology standards.

Peter Shams-Avari

ASRT Health Policy Manager

Calendar of Events
November 2008

- Daylight Saving Time Ends — Nov. 2
- Election Day — Nov. 4
- Thanksgiving — Nov. 27

December 2008

- Winter Begins — Dec. 21
- Happy Holidays

January 2009

- Register for the 2009 R.T. in D.C. event
- 111th Congress Convenes — Jan. 3

Tips and Tasks
A list of monthly tasks to accomplish for effective advocacy

November 2008

- Vote!
- Start building your social network of advocates. Start an e-mail distribution list of colleagues, family and friends so you will be ready when you are alerted by the ASRT for a call-to-action.

December 2008

- Welcome new members of congress; send a congratulatory e-mail to your new representative or senator.
- Send a “thank-you” to your representatives who have supported and cosponsored the CARE bill.
- Visit your lawmakers while they are at their district offices.

January 2009

- Learn what’s new on the horizon. Look over the ASRT legislative agenda.