Welcome!

Although it wasn’t our original intention, this issue of Legislative Review became reminiscent of the past as articles from Committee on R.T. Advocacy (CRTA) members came rolling in. I think you’ll get the same feeling as you read the articles in this issue. CRTA Vice Chairman Nick Gimmi wrote an article about his experiences on Capitol Hill during 2011, and other CRTA members went beyond 2011 and shared their experiences and thoughts about being on the committee.

2011 was a good year. In April a Capitol Hill briefing on radiation therapy technologies and patient issues further promoted the importance of the CARE bill. Then, in June, we welcomed the introduction of the CARE bill by Rep. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., and Rep. John Barrow, D-Ga. Throughout the year we worked hard, and we feel confident we are getting closer to its passage. At the end of 2011 the CARE bill had 87 cosponsors. In alliance with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists, the American College of Radiology and the Society of Radiology Physician Extenders, the ASRT worked to get H.R. 3032, the Medicare Access to Radiology Care Act introduced in September. Passage of MARCA would promote efficiency in health care by utilizing a team approach, save Medicare money and increase jobs.

Of course, we are looking to the future too! It is a 2012 goal of the Legislative Review newsletter to inform and educate members about the ASRT Political Action Committee, or ASRT-PAC. We intend to let you know about fundraising efforts, why contributing to the PAC helps the radiologic science profession and how you can help, so be sure to read the two articles in this issue. Another goal is to give you tools for becoming a strong advocate and influencing others to do the same. I hope you use articles like E.N.G.A.G.E. as learning and mentoring opportunities.

As always, we want your suggestions and comments about articles, so please give us a call at 800-444-2778, Ext. 1322, or e-mail us at governmentrelations@asrt.org. Your help is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christine J. Lung, CAE
ASRT Vice President of Government Relations and Public Policy

A New Year and More Ways to CARE for Your Profession

Christine J. Lung, CAE
ASRT Vice President of Government Relations & Public Policy

2012 is finally here! If you are anything like me you had some successes last year and a few setbacks, some dynamic moments and some static times when nothing seemed to change at all. I would like to recap some of 2011’s events for you.

We held our first radiologist extender track at R.T. in D.C., inviting registered radiologist assistants and radiology practitioner assistants to come to Washington and lobby on behalf of their profession for the Medicare Access for Radiology Care Act (MARCA), which will create Medicare recognition of this new profession. The Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (CARE) bill was introduced in June as H.R. 2104, and we have nearly 70 bipartisan cosponsors seven months later. Thanks to an article published in The New York Times that described “questions about the competence, training and oversight of technologists who operate powerful equipment,” the CARE bill had unprecedented media exposure that drew the attention of Capitol Hill. Utah became the 29th state to license radiologist assistants, and three affiliate societies (Idaho, North Carolina and Georgia) started major campaigns to enact licensure laws in their states.

This year is looking like it will be just as busy as 2011. In November the entire House of Representatives, a third of the Senate and the presidency are up for election, shortening Congress’ schedule even more as lawmakers head home to campaign for reelection. Thirty-eight state legislatures will start their 2012 sessions in January, making the first four months of the year the busiest time for lawmaking. Registration is open for our 2012 R.T. in D.C. advocacy event, and ASRT-PAC has a major fundraising campaign underway. This is an
exciting time to be an R.T. advocate, with radiation dose reduction issues and the economics of health care being discussed at the federal, state and local levels, generating opportunities to talk with your peers about your profession.

Because it is a new year I hope one of your resolutions is to discuss the need for consistent educational and certification standards for medical imaging and radiation therapy personnel with your employers, students, colleagues and lawmakers. Let’s not allow this opportunity to pass by, but grasp it and use it to the radiologic science profession’s advantage. Each new year brings hope for revitalization and reward. Resolve to be an engaged, active R.T. advocate at the state, federal and local levels and 2012 will be a year of reward for you and the medical imaging and radiation therapy profession.

PAC the House

ASRT-PAC’s Newest Fundraising Campaign

Syd Sanders
ASRT Grass-roots Coordinator

You would think, when it comes to requesting financial contributions to give to political figures, it would be hard to muster up enthusiasm. At no other time in history has faith in Congress been so low and the wide range of political beliefs so prominent. You might think choosing a political candidate to support for election to the U.S. Senate or House of Representative could be as safe as walking a tight rope and dangerous to attempt. That may be true, but the risk is worth it. Keeping or electing new candidates that share your beliefs can be the one thing that prevents you from plummeting off the rope.

During this election year there are sure to be plenty of discussions and disagreements about politics among you. But, for the ASRT-PAC, the decision which political figures receive support really isn't that hard. The bottom line is we support congressional candidates who support our initiatives. In other words, we support candidates who believe safe medical imaging is essential for quality health care. It doesn't matter if they're Republican or Democrat, we look for candidates who are willing to speak out and stand up for these values.

ASRT members have been strong supporters of the ASRT-PAC's mission and the goals that ASRT is trying to accomplish through federal legislation, and the ASRT-PAC has seen steady contributions throughout the years. Because of this history we're enthusiastic about the potential of increasing PAC funds, even if it could be a contentious election year.

ASRT member dues cannot be used for making financial contributions to candidates' campaigns, so we rely solely on your generous donations. This year, we have kicked off a fundraising campaign called PAC the House to build awareness about the PAC. If you call in to renew your membership you'll be asked to contribute, and you will no doubt see more and more about making a contribution to the PAC throughout the coming months. You will be encouraged (often) to make a secure online contribution and help increase the number of radiologic technologists who believe that a unified voice is the best voice. We are, after all, the home for radiologic technologists, so let's fill our home with PAC contributions and send a clear message to Congress that we believe in patient safety. Help us PAC the House!

If you have any questions or comments about the ASRT-PAC, we welcome your thoughts. Simply send an e-mail to governmentrelations@asrt.org for a quick response.

Member Spotlight

CRTA Vice Chairman Nick Gimmi has been an integral member since 2009 and continues to be a driving force behind the committee's success. Nick's goal to elevate advocacy for the radiologic technology profession and his enthusiasm for advocacy, have gone hand-in-hand with his responsibilities as a past chairman and board member for the Virginia Society of Radiologic Technologists. His passion and dedication have also led him to the role of legislative affairs co-chair for the VSRT.

Nick says, "I believe advocacy is a way for folks to promote their profession and stay engaged in efforts to better serve their patients. Through advocacy, we really get a sense that we can make a difference in bettering our profession and providing better outcomes for patients who expect high-quality care in an environment that is not always set up to give it!"

Nick received his associates of applied science degree at Northern Virginia Community College and continues to be involved at the college by being a clinical preceptor for radiology students. His involvement allows him to make a difference in many students' career paths. He currently works at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital in Alexandria, Va., as the clinical coordinator for the Diagnostics Division of the Imaging Department. Nick staunchly believes that, "As guardians and experts for what we do, we must convince others that it takes skill and proper training to be effective." His fierce dedication to educational standards for the medical imaging profession is apparent.

Because of Nick's close proximity to Washington, D.C., he has had the opportunity of going on Capitol Hill with ASRT lobbyists and staff. Not only has this experience allowed him to be an effective vice chairman of the CRTA, it has also fulfilled his belief that we all have a duty to get involved, even in a small way, to pave the way for our profession, and it has given him an arsenal of memories and stories! I hope you enjoy his article about a couple of these experiences titled Living Close to D.C. — My Experiences on the Hill."
Benefits of Living Close to D.C.
Nick Gimmi, B.S., R.T.(R)(CT)
Virginia

As legislative cochairman and past board member for the Virginia Society of Radiologic Technologists, I've had the opportunity to do what few others have had the opportunity to do: I have been able to go to Capitol Hill with ASRT core group of lobbyists Christine Lung, Dave Goch and Amy Schoppman.

I live in Arlington County, Virginia, right over the border from our nation’s capital, and in fact when anyone asks I refer to Washington, D.C., as my home. Last year, I went to D.C. and met the group at Dave and Amy’s office where we had a meeting to discuss our strategy before we headed out for our 20 scheduled visits. It was so exciting! Our lobbyists have developed relationships with legislative assistants to sell the value of our cause to their bosses who are key members of Congress. Congress truly has their plates full with thousands of bills to consider, so what our lobbyist group does is vital to grabbing the attention of our legislators. This group really has their eye on the ball with getting key congressman to see the value in the CARE bill.

With phones in hand and story straight, we spent a lot of time on the Senate side of Capitol Hill. We visited senators that have a desire to make change and that may have ties with important committees that are responsible for moving our bill through Congress. Because we had so many visits scheduled in one day, our group split up to give us an opportunity to spend more time with the health legislative assistants, who would be digesting the merits of the bill and presenting them in a meaningful way to their bosses. Most of the time, you will not have the opportunity to meet personally with a senator or congressman. They often have floor votes, committee meetings and various appointments that take them away from the office. If you do, you should always be prepared with the merits of the bill, which the group and I were ready to present. At the end of the day, we went over reactions from some of the folks we spoke with and strategized about who we thought were potential cosponsors for the CARE bill. It was a very full day!

Not only do ASRT lobbyists build relationships with legislative staff, they're also in touch with other societies that have similar values and causes. These coalitions give strength and numbers to a larger voice for increased professional standards. Christine, Dave and Amy are constantly looking for those edges to advance this bill forward. Going to "the hill" is one of the most exciting opportunities anyone can have in their lifetime. Standing up for a cause you truly believe in and seeing a team of professionals dedicated to it make you feel needed and empowered. I truly enjoyed the opportunity to see these professionals in action and observe what their core beliefs are and how they go about staying with a cause that I truly believe is key to enhancing the value of the care we give to our patients.

What It Means To Be on the CRTA
The following are some thoughts from Committee on R.T. Advocacy members about their experiences being on the committee and what being on the committee has meant to them.

David LeClair, B.S., R.T.(R)
Massachusetts
Committee member since 2004

Many years ago when I was a student, my instructor stressed to me how important it was to support the Massachusetts Society of Radiologic Technologists and take an active interest in my profession. Being properly credentialed to use ionizing radiation for medical purposes became my top priority after joining the society. I immediately joined David Sack and his team to lobby our legislators in Massachusetts to pass a state licensure bill requiring proper standards of education. After many years of lobbying and countless hours of effort from each team member, the bill passed in 1989.

Receiving an invitation from the ASRT to become a member of the CRTA and be a part of a lobbying effort to obtain minimum standards of education for the entire nation was an extreme honor. It gave me an opportunity to use my lobbying skills on a national level to elevate the radiologic science profession. It has been a valuable experience getting to know how Congress works and communicating with our congressmen and senators.

There’s no doubt that getting the CARE bill passed has been a long process, even frustrating at times, but I am proud to be a part of the CRTA, a committed group of professionals. I look forward to visiting Washington every spring to share time with the committee, discuss radiology standards and visit our congressional offices. The CRTA team members have the dedication to carry it through, and I am confident that we will reach our goal soon for the safety of all patients in this country.

Dawn Couch Moore, M.M.Sc., R.T.(R)
Georgia
Committee member since 2010

Overwhelming - "that's how I would describe my year on the CRTA committee. There is so much to learn about the legislative process! I was a novice at political activism, and there is a big learning curve. I am definitely out of my comfort zone. It is also a challenge to find enough time to devote to the CRTA with everything else going on in my life. I'm sure that all committee members share this problem.
With all that said, I have enjoyed the experience and I have had contact with many wonderful people who are passionate about our profession. The ASRT staff is exceptional! Syd Sanders does a great job keeping us on track. I have resolved to find more time to dedicate to the CRTA and I am becoming more comfortable speaking to elected officials and colleagues about the CARE bill. In other words, I intend to be a part of the committee again and continue to work together to see the CARE bill passed in 2012!

Diane Mayo, R.T.(R)(CT)
Mississippi
Committee member since 2002

I have served on the CRTA since before it became a committee; we started out as a task force. This has been a wonderful opportunity, and I will always be an active supporter of getting the CARE legislation passed even when not a CRTA member.

Over the years I have had plenty of great memories along with some painful frustrations. However, I want to share my personal best and worst, all within ONE congress.

I got a call from Christine Lung saying that she and our lobbyist had decided that my congressman, Rep. Chip Pickering, would make a great sponsor for the CARE bill. She wanted me to "make the ask." I was to contact his office to try to set up an appointment either at home or his D.C. office. I have to admit, one of the first things that went through my head was, "Cool, I've always wanted to go to D.C. in December or January so maybe they will want me to meet with him there!"

I planned to call his staff that afternoon, but in the meantime I had taken my group of senior students out for lunch. Heading back to my car, who do I see walking up the sidewalk but Chip. It was freezing outside so I told my students to get in the car while I waited for Chip. We hugged and chatted for a few minutes, then I made the "ask" and he said yes - I was excited! I had to ask him, "Did you say YES??"

But then two years later it was the end of congress. We were so close to getting our bill to the House floor for a vote. The bill had already passed in the Senate. The House was meeting until late that final night and our lobbyist had promised to call me if the vote occurred. I was at a Christmas party, miserable, holding my phone in my hand, waiting for that call that never came. I had an e-mail from Chip's health legislative assistant the next morning telling me we came so close but in the end we just ran out of time.

Well I was so frustrated and said, "I quit. I will no longer lobby for the CARE bill or any other bill." I was just emotionally drained. Needless to say within a month I was right back working to get the CARE bill passed.

The ASRT Committee on R.T. Advocacy is a group of ASRT Grass-roots Network members living in strategic areas of the U.S. We're very proud of the work we do and welcome enthusiastic ASRT members who want to improve their profession through advocacy with us. All members of the CRTA are patient advocates (some with more experience than others!) and are selected by the incoming ASRT president for a one-year appointment beginning April 1. If you're interested in becoming a part of this committee, submit an ASRT volunteer form to be considered.

E-N-G-A-G-E!
Leisa Arnold, M.H.A., R.T. (R) (M)
Ohio

I work in a small rural community hospital in southeastern Ohio and would like to welcome you to a learning opportunity about engaging others to be more active in issues involving technologists. Personally, over the years I have been concerned at times at people's lack of involvement in issues related to their career; however, I have learned that I have to take that apprehension and turn it into motivation! What am I talking about? I'm talking about an action plan for engagement, that's what. Get people involved and excited about the issues. What action plan and how can one person make a difference? I use a simple acronym as a guideline to follow as I strive to be a positive influence about advocating for others. I hope it helps you too! It's easy to remember, so start engaging your coworkers into being more involved with current issues.

E - Enthusiasm! Tell everyone you know, give them information. Knowledge is powerful.
N — Notify! Give others easy ways to contact Congress. The numbers of people contacting Congress mean a great deal.
G - Gather information! Also, know what you are talking about. If you do not know a specific answer, find out and get back to the person who asked.
A - Be an advocate yourself! You are the example; lead by example.
G - Give of yourself! Give your time.
E - Engage those around you by allowing them to become involved! Give demonstrations on how to contact Congress and show your colleagues how to navigate the congressional website. Show them the way, be patient and mentor them. Most of all think about how your actions and your attitude affect those around you and engage them into being involved in their profession!

ASRT Political Action Committee

How’s Your State Doing?
Cathie Kukec, R.T. (R)(QM), CBPN-IC
Illinois

Washington insider, political activist, campaign supporter, PAC contributor: have you heard these terms used before? Do any of these terms describe you or your fellow R.T.s? According to the ASRT website, a political action committee, or PAC, supports an organization's political goals by collecting money from people who share those goals and making contributions to political candidates who support those goals. A PAC is important to the ASRT and radiologic technologists because it brings R.T.s together and helps support candidates who are supportive of our profession and our concerns. It's important to note the ASRT-PAC is bipartisan and not devoted to any particular party.

Why should you support the ASRT-PAC? By contributing to the PAC, you make sure a strong message is sent to Washington, D.C., that ASRT members are aware of health care issues that affect our patients and our profession. By making a contribution to the ASRT PAC, you are sending the message that you support the legislative goals of the ASRT, including the CARE bill and RA reimbursement issues.

The ASRT lists the total of contributions by state: on their website as a visual representation of where the contributions are coming from. How is your state doing? Can you guess which states give the most money and which give the least? Are ASRT-PAC contributions relative to the amount of grass-roots support by these states? Recent figures show that the "top producing" state for ASRT-PAC contributions was California with $357 in contributions, followed closely by New York with $345. A few states had no contributions, but other contributions ranged from $3.50 up to $187.25, bringing the 2011 total to $3,705.25!

Although PAC contributions are not tax-deductible, you should feel free to contribute whatever amount you can, knowing that you are helping to support political candidates who make radiologic technologists and their patients a top priority. You CAN make a difference in how the political process works! Call 800-444-2778 to speak with a Member Services representative or go online to the ASRT website and make a secure donation today.

Legislative Review Calendar of Events

January
- 3 - Registration for R.T. in D.C. 2012 begins
- 16 - Martin Luther King holiday
- 17 - 112th Congress 2nd Session convenes

February
- 20 - President's Day
- 24 - R.T. in D.C. registration ends

March
- 11 - Daylight savings time begins
- 20 - First day of spring
- 25-27 - R.T. in D.C.

April
- March 30 - April 15 - House recess
- 20-23 - House recess
- 6 - Good Friday
- 20 - Next issue of Legislative Review scheduled to be published

Tips and Tasks – Accomplishing Effective Advocacy One Month at a Time

January
- Register for R.T. in D.C.!
- Get to know your new members of Congress. Send an e-mail introducing yourself and begin building a relationship with the office staff. Find out who they are by clicking on your state map at http://asrt.capwiz.com/asrt/dbq/officials/.

February
• Meet with colleagues and make group plans for informing your community and elected officials about the radiologic science profession and how important you are to ensuring patient safety.

March
• Attend R.T. in D.C.! If you can’t attend in person, attend "virtually." E-mail your representative and senators and let them know you support the CARE bill and want them to pass it into law.

April
• Visit your congressman during the congressional spring recess while they are at home in their district office. Visit a town hall meeting or call the office scheduler and set up an appointment.

Useful Links
Take It Further advocacy  
www.asrt.org/TakeItFurther

ASRT eAdvocacy for You  
www.asrt.org/capwiz

Join the ASRT Grass-roots Network  
www.asrt.org/grassroots

CARE bill background  
www.asrt.org/carebill

Library of Congress legislative information:  
www.asrt.org/thomas