

Scopes of Practice, Practice Standards, Advisory Opinion Statements and Position Statements

(What are they and how does ASRT use them?)

Scope of Practice

The scope of practice outlines the parameters of practice, identifies the boundaries for practice and usually is formatted as a list of tasks that are appropriate for an individual who is educationally prepared and clinically competent for that profession.

The scope of practice is limited to that which the law allows for specific education and experience, and specific demonstrated competency. Most states have laws, licensing bodies and regulations that describe requirements for education and training and define a profession's scope of practice.

It is important to note that even though the scope of practice is often a list of tasks it should be worded broadly and not be a "laundry list". For example, if your scope of practice includes starting and maintaining intravenous access, how and what you use to start an IV is not specifically indicated. It won't include the devices you use, such as a peripherally-inserted central catheter line. Getting too specific limits the practice and we want to keep it broad. However, if the House believes there needs to be more clarification about a specific type of IV access, an advisory opinion statement should be developed.

Practice Standards

The practice standards define the practice and establish general criteria to determine compliance.

Practice standards are authoritative statements established by the profession for judging the quality of practice, service and education. Professional practice constantly changes as a result of a number of factors including technological advances, market and economic forces, and statutory and regulatory mandates.

While a minimum standard of acceptable performance is appropriate and should be followed by all medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals, it is inappropriate to assume that professional practice is the same in all states. Community custom, state statute or regulation may dictate practice parameters. ***Wherever there is a conflict between these standards and state or local statutes and regulations, the state or local statutes and regulations supersede these standards.*** Recognizing this, the profession has adopted standards that are general in nature.

Also, standards of practice and scopes of practice usually are the documents that states, institutions and legal advisors use when questions arise about the practice of specific professionals.

Advisory Opinion Statements

The advisory opinions are interpretations of the standards intended for clarification and guidance for specific practice issues.

The advisory opinion statements are an avenue for the organization to address *practice-specific* issues that are not specifically addressed in practice standards or scopes of practice. The administration of vaccinations by medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals is a good example of when the ASRT would consider issuing an advisory opinion statement. Even though the practice standards indicate that administering pharmaceuticals is within the scope of practice for R.T.s who are educationally prepared and clinically competent, the practice standards do not specially address administering vaccinations.

Position Statements

Position statements reflect the beliefs or standing of the American Society of Radiologic Technologists. In reviewing position statements, radiologic technologists must take into account existing state statutes and institutional policy.

Position statements normally address nonpractice issues, but are important to an organization's legislative body. States, institutions and legal advisors can consider position statements, but the practice standards and scopes of practice carry more weight. When practice issues are addressed in both position statements and standards or scopes of practice, the organization introduces risk in ensuring consistency in defining practice for the profession. Practice specific issues are best addressed in scope of practice or practice standards, or by issuing an advisory opinion statement.