

February 6, 2009

Good afternoon, my name is David Carlson and I am a senior radiologic technology student at Middlesex Hospital and Middlesex Community College. I choose to pursue this highly challenging career path after proudly serving my country for 20 years in the United States Navy. I am now in my 21st month of training of the intensive 27 month program in Radiologic Technology at Middlesex Hospital.

I am here today to show support for SB 406 and have the new field of Radiologist Assistant formally recognized by the state. I ask that you support the admittance of this profession into the Chapter 376c bill, which is the current medical imaging law. Individuals who progress into this field are required to have graduated from an accredited radiographer school, successfully passed the national registry exam, and have already been practicing as a radiologic technologist. The position of Radiologist Assistant has been developed to allow radiographers the ability to advance their education and elevate into positions of greater responsibility while retaining their critical skill and knowledge in the medical imaging field. Radiologist Assistants have completed a master's degree program focused on very specific radiographic curriculum. They are accredited by the American College of Radiology and are experts in medical imaging. Radiologist Assistants have every right to be granted licensure in the state of Connecticut as they have completed very intense and thorough training in medical imaging.

At this time I am also perplexed about the possibility of the state of Connecticut allowing Physician Assistants to administer ionizing radiation. Physician Assistants have also completed very intensive training. However, Physician Assistants have NOT received the necessary training to properly and safely conduct radiographic exams. Physician Assistants should NOT be confused with Radiologist Assistants by any stretch of the imagination. Physician Assistants are not fluent in radiation production and its characteristics, radiation protection and safety, x-ray equipment operation, exposure variables, analysis of image quality, or proper patient positioning, all of which takes extensive training to become certified to administer ionizing radiation.

It is common knowledge that ionizing radiation has the potential to be very harmful if not administered properly. The skills required to safely perform radiographic exams requires long extensive training and is not easily learned. Most accredited radiographic training programs, even "certificate" programs, are a minimum of two years continuous full time training. The programs entail not only human anatomy and physiology, but radiation production, radiation physics, proper positioning protocols, and radiobiology just to name a few. Most importantly, radiologic technologists are well trained in radiation safety as mandated by our Code of Ethics. Performing all exams correctly with accuracy is essential to minimize patient exposure to ionizing radiation. This profession is a learned science and must only be performed by licensed professionals. The technologist know if their patient is properly positioned and what technique to utilize to produce a diagnostically superior image. Additionally, the technologists also know how to adjust exposure factors when sub-optimum results do occur. This IS NOT a "push-button" profession, it is a serious and vital medical profession that must only be conducted by properly licensed professionals.

In conclusion, Radiologist Assistants are the professionals that should be licensed to administer ionizing radiation along with their fellow radiologic technologists. They have the experience and the training required to safely perform complex radiographic procedures. I am not implying that Physician Assistants are unimportant or unskilled in medicine. Physician Assistants are however, completely untrained in the field of radiologic science and should be excluded from administering ANY form of radiation to patients as this would be detrimental to public health and safety. Furthermore, if Physician Assistants were granted the right to perform radiographic exams this would immediately make the Radiologist Assistants practically obsolete in addition to the public health and safety risks.

Thank you for your time and attention in this important issue.

Respectfully,



David R. Carlson

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