

Good Afternoon Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is William Hennessy. I am currently the department chair and director of the diagnostic imaging program at Quinnipiac University. In addition, I am a state licensed and multi-certified radiologic technologist.

I am here today to represent the university's Radiologist Assistant Program. We strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 406 which would lead to licensure of this new practitioner in the State of Connecticut.

In 2003 the American College of Radiology (ACR) and the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) joined forces to address the expected national shortage of radiologists and projected increase in the need for radiologic and imaging procedures over the next few decades. The intent of these groups was to provide a new practitioner already educated and certified in the profession, and promote additional education, training and certification to assist in the performance of these procedures.

Prior to the establishment of the RA, the only physician extender in radiology that could assist in the performance of these procedures was known as a Radiology Practitioner Assistant (RPA). The ACR determined that the lack of independent oversight, unrestricted scope of practice and no certification examination from a nationally recognized agency would not be in the best interest of patient care and safety. Consequently, the role of the RA was delineated by the ACR and the ASRT. The ACR now recognizes RA's as a qualified radiology extender.

Since the university already had an established and accredited imaging program which terminated in a baccalaureate degree; the department's new initiative was to develop and implement a master's level radiologist assistant program.

With the assistance, support and promotion of many state radiologists, a curriculum, learning objectives and a comprehensive clinical evaluative system was developed and submitted to the State of Connecticut Department of Higher Education. This new program was enthusiastically endorsed and licensed by the Department of Higher Education on November 5, 2007. This intensive 18 month program has been formally recognized as one of only 9 programs in the country by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists and is listed on the ASRT website for technologists interested in pursuing this new advanced clinical career.

The program accepted its first cohort of students in June of 2008 and is expected to complete all academic and clinical objectives by December of 2009, leading to advanced certification and joining the over 100 RA's currently in practice. The program is presently affiliated with 13 top-ranked medical and imaging institutions in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York including Yale New Haven Hospital, the University of Connecticut Medical Center, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Massachusetts General Hospital. We are the only RA program in the country with an American Board of Radiology (ABR) certified radiologist as its full-time director and primary faculty. In

support of this director, other ABR board certified radiologists provide didactic instruction and clinical preceptor ships.

If Senate Bill 406 is adopted, we would be one of 26 states that have already licensed the RA or have pending legislation. This new practitioner is quickly being recognized as a vital member of the radiology team.

It is imperative that the RA become licensed in the State of Connecticut. In addition to the intense didactic and clinical curriculum of the radiologic technologist, the radiologist assistant's high – level knowledge of optimal diagnostic image acquisition, the multiple effects of radiation exposure to patients, radiation protection concepts and applications, and patient safety using sophisticated and complex imaging technology, exceeds the level of any other physician extender in the radiology department.

This physician extender also possesses the only additional certification in the subspecialty of radiology. Licensure of the radiologist assistant will ensure that the patients of Connecticut will receive the highest quality patient care during all diagnostic imaging procedures.

Thank you for your kind attentions and I hope you support this bill.