



On March 8 and 9, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) and the SNM Technologist Section (SNMTS) teamed up for the “RT in DC” assault on Capitol Hill. More than 100 radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists converged on the Hill to lobby legislators on behalf of the Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence (CARE) bill (HR1214 in the House of Representatives) and the RadCARE bill (S1197 in the Senate). Participants also attended a training session designed to increase their effectiveness in dealing with members of Congress and Congressional staff. It certainly paid off this year, as evidenced by the results below. We would like to thank the ASRT for organizing this event and express our appreciation for the shock troops from the ASRT and the SNMTS. They are more effective every year.

CARE Bill Update

Enthusiasm for the CARE and RadCARE bills continues to build on Capitol Hill, with a number of new cosponsors signing on in February and March. New cosponsors in the House include Representatives Melissa Hart (R-PA), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Danny Davis (D-IL), George Miller (D-CA), David Wu (D-OR), Henry Hyde (R-IL), Rob Simmons (R-CT), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI), Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), and Nick Lampson (D-TX). This brought the total cosponsorship in the House to 79 at Newsline press time. Senators Mark Dayton (D-MN) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT) have signed on to bring the total number of sponsors in the Senate to 10.

Track the progress of S1197 and HR1214 and see the latest cosponsors through the Library of Congress Web site at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

Global Billing for Offsite Reading

A change to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regulations makes billing for offsite medical image interpretation easier for imaging centers. Nuclear medicine physicians under contractual arrangement with an imaging center may interpret images off site while the imaging center submits a global bill to Medicare. Global billing for remote reading was previously prohibited.

Now, Medicare providers can more efficiently take advantage of offsite arrangements such as teleradiology.

This reform is a result of letters sent to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs by SNM and others beginning in May 2002. The change was issued February 27, 2004, in Transmittal 111—Reassignment Under a Contractual Agreement, which implements Section 952 of HR1 (the 2003 Medicare Reform bill). For more information, visit the Practice Management area of www.snm.org.

Medicare Reimbursement Help

SNM’s massive Ambulatory Payment Classification chart, Nuclear Medicine Procedures, Radiopharmaceuticals and Drugs, has been updated with the latest information from Transmittal 113 and 112. Hospitals may use this latest coding data for billing nuclear medicine services. The Medicare Physician Fee Schedule for nuclear medicine procedures was recently revised, and the SNM chart is available. Both charts may be downloaded from www.snm.org by clicking on Practice Management.

Medical Use of Byproduct Material

Comments were submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on proposed changes to Part 35 Training and Experience under the Medical Use of Byproduct Material rules. A few points to note are:

- The SNM is supportive of revising the regulations but is apprehensive about the implementation of the proposed changes.
- The rule should recognize that American Board of Medical Specialties–certified nuclear medicine physicians, radiologists, and radiation oncologists have unique training, experience, and examinations that go well beyond the minimum requirements of the alternate pathway.

The full letter sent to the NRC and a link to the initial draft by the NRC are available at www.snm.org in the Government Relations area.

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