



Wisconsin Society of Radiologic Technologists

Legislative Committee Report-Annual Conference, April 2022
Sandra Helinski, MBA, RTR, QM, MR--Legislative Committee Chairperson

The WSRT legislative committee continued to monitor the regulatory activities of the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) and the Wisconsin state legislature. It was encouraging to see activity in Madison resume, as hearings on proposed legislation were once again held in person. The Radiography Examining Board (REB), our professional state board, held successful virtual meetings to oversee our profession in accordance with the provisions of our licensure law. The knowledge gained by adaptations in virtual communication will serve the WSRT, Radiography Examining Board (REB), and other state agencies in carrying out the business of the people well into the future, whatever it may bring.

As mentioned in last year's report, the effects of the pandemic highlighted the state's need to expedite licensure applications to promote a strong workforce in all licensed professions. The legislature took matters into its own hands to change the Department of Safety and Professional Service (DPS) approval processes by the introduction of two bills. I submitted testimony on behalf of the WSRT Board of Directors in favor of both bills for the hearings held by the Senate Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Reform, and the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform, the committees to which these bills were assigned. Thank you to Randy Griswold, legislative committee member, for his input on the testimonials.

SB 232/AB217 PROVISIONAL LICENSURE would have required the DPS to draft rules to set up a process for creation of a provisional license for persons who have applied, but are awaiting final approval. The individual credentialing boards, such as our Radiography Examining Board would have been allowed to set up their own rules that could supercede DPS rules. The WSRT was in favor of this legislation as approval of the granting of provisional licenses remained in the control of our own the Radiography Examining board. Also, timely decisions would be made to allow qualified and credentialed applicants to begin working in their field, BY those working in the radiologic profession. This law did not pass in this legislative session and will have to be reintroduced next session.

AB 218/SB 233 PASSIVE LICENSURE REVIEW was a similar bill that required prompt review of licensure applications by a passive process. A 10-day limit is placed on the DPS to issue a license once the respective occupational licensing board, our REB for example, approves the applicant's credentials. The DPS must still ensure that the applicant satisfies eligibility requirements as set forth in the radiography licensure law (Chapter 462 State Statutes) including review of arrest and conviction records. The WSRT supported this legislation for the same reasons as the previous bill along with the fact that the integrity of the individual practicing in the field is upheld through DPS review. **This bill was signed into law by Governor Evers on December 7, 2021 as 2021 Wisconsin Act 118.**

A DPS Press Release dated April 1 announced the launch of "LicenseE", effective May 16. LicenseE will be a "new self- guided, online platform that is replacing paper-based applications in occupational licensing" according to the release. Details will be available on the DPS website to assist applicants.

The Radiography Examining Board held hearings on the creation of **Radiography Rule 7**, regarding late renewal and reinstatement of radiography and LXMO (Limited X-ray Machine Operator) license and permits respectively. This was mostly a procedural matter to create guidelines for such applicants to successfully work in the radiographic profession in renewal and reinstatement circumstances. These provisions had not yet been addressed in the original Rule creation of the licensure law. I submitted testimony to the REB in favor of the creation of Rad Rule 7. The REB has sent final rules to be published in the administrative register.

The ASRT Committee on Radiologic Technologist Advocacy (CRTA) Region 5 has held teleconference meetings to survey regulatory matters and inventory actions and concerns in the states of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. I have created reports and submitted them to Mr. Scott Haglund, Region 5 leader with WSRT President Dan Vandermeulen's approval. The ASRT has continued to advocate for the passage of the federal MARCA Bill (Medicare Access to Radiology Care Act) introduced as Senate Bill 2641 and House Bill HR 3657 last summer. This bill would ensure that services provided by a radiologist assistant, supervised by a radiologist as part of radiologist-led patient care team receive complete Medicare reimbursement, regardless of the health care setting in which it is performed. Partisanship and mid-term election attention will make action on this bill unlikely in this Congressional session.

What should become apparent in this report is the importance of the Radiography Examining Board, created by the passage of our licensure law in 2010 (Wisconsin Act 106, 2009). In the bills introduced this past year, our Wisconsin legislature had demonstrated their willingness to trust the occupational licensing boards, such as our REB, to be the body to confirm an individual's eligibility for a radiographic license, and even to supercede the DSPS's rules in some cases. During the legislative journey to radiographic licensure, our Senate Sponsor, former Senator John Lehman insisted that radiographers have the ability to oversee themselves, by a state board consisting of individuals **working** in the radiographic profession. Licensure, though our REB has made radiologic technologists **professionals** in our state, equal to nurses, respiratory therapists and other licensed individuals. If there were no REB, decisions about radiographic practices would be made by outsiders, encroaching upon our unique role in health care and potentially delegating our jobs to others. I am not able to close this report by emphasizing that licensure is more important **now** than ever. With the shortage of workers in all fields, the fact that unqualified and non-radiologic personnel **cannot** assume our role in medical imaging is more than significant. It might be attractive to think that we should move to alleviate the staffing gaps in our workplaces by diminishing the qualifications necessary to perform radiography. That would be a short sighted solution against the tenets of our licensure law. Such a move would undo what the WSRT accomplished for radiography, and most importantly, adversely impact proper radiologic health care for patients. We as technologists should be proud to have a state society, our WSRT, which stood up for our profession and patients to bring a high standard of radiologic competence to Wisconsin. Licensure, as a tangible example of the advocacy demonstrated by the WSRT, needs all of our ongoing support. If you are not already a member, I hope join the WSRT to become a part of its long standing efforts to improve the practice of radiologic patient care and associate yourself with its legacy of advocacy and education.

I want to thank Mr. Blumenfeld and Erin Fabrizio, our Madison policy advisors for continuing to work with us this past year. As advocacy experts, they guided us to the passage of our licensure law and have continued to help us safeguard its integrity. The members of the Radiography Examining Board chaired by Mr. Donald Borst, deserve recognition for their time and dedication to the oversight of radiography in Wisconsin. I thank the WSRT Board of Directors and the WSRT membership for their continued support and trust as Legislative Committee Chairperson.

Respectfully submitted,
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