

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission Members,

I respectfully submit a motion to change Texas Medical Physics licensure to allow a limited scope license for the practice of MRI physics.

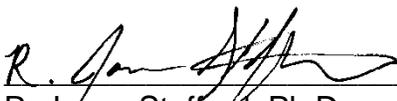
Motivation for this request is that a fundamental difference in the safety, equipment and image quality considerations of MRI versus other modalities exists. Since establishment of Medical Physics licensure in Texas, MRI physics practice has evolved at the national level to include highly skilled practitioners who are board certified in MRI only. Unfortunately, these boards are not currently recognized by Texas Medical Physics licensure.

MRI image quality, equipment performance evaluation as well as patient, personnel and public safety issues are quite separate and distinct from the standard practice of Diagnostic Medical Physics. Safety issues in particular have been put into the national spotlight as injuries to patients and personnel have risen at an alarming pace as well as an increase in MRI scanning of patients with MRI conditional implants requiring special attention to assessment of implant as well as equipment and acquisition parameters. To help promote the appropriate training of personnel in this discipline, the American Association of Physicists and American College of Radiology (ACR) have worked together to help define minimum practice requirements for qualified MRI physicists. This definition is used by accreditation programs, such as those offered by the ACR and JCAHO, aimed at maintaining quality and safety standards for patient care.

From these recommendations, the current definition of a qualified MRI physicist includes those who have board certification from the American Board of Medical Physics in MRI. However, because current Texas licensure laws only recognizes Diagnostic Medical Physics board certification from the American Board of Radiology, and doesn't allow a limited scope of practice in MRI physics, these highly qualified individuals who are experts in MRI safety, equipment and imaging, cannot be licensed to practice in the state of Texas.

Given the proliferation of MRI equipment, the advancing imaging technology and numerous safety issues being raised by national organizations such as the FDA, ACR and JCAHO, it would seem that moving forward, it is imperative and in line with national initiatives for both quality and patient safety culture to modernize the Texas licensure laws for medical physicists to include a limited scope of practice for MRI physicists with appropriate board certification.

Sincerely,



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R. Jason Stafford, Ph.D.