

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Janet Wood](#); [Brittany Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report  
**Date:** Monday, June 09, 2014 12:37:37 PM

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**From:** nancy bui  
**Sent:** Monday, June 09, 2014 11:13 AM  
**To:** Sunset Advisory Commission  
**Subject:** Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report

Date: June 9, 2014

Dear Sunset Advisory Committee,

I am enrolled in a respiratory therapy program. In May 2014, the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report recommended to discontinue 19 regulatory programs currently housed at the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) which includes the Respiratory Care Practitioners Program (Page 4, Issue 3 and Pages 106-108, Appendix E).

The steps a student must take to obtain the skill set required to become a licensed RCP are many. The minimum education requirement is an Associate's degree in Respiratory Therapy. Before providing patient care, a student must prove competency by passing written examinations and laboratory proficiencies with an instructor. Once in the hospital, the student is directly observed by an instructor and must complete the same proficiencies to prove competency while delivering patient care. To obtain the critical thinking skills required to make quick life or death decisions as an RCP, the student must complete hundreds of hours in all areas of the hospital: medical/surgical, adult intensive care, neonatal and pediatric intensive care, the emergency room, and the pulmonary function laboratory completing case studies, rounding with physicians, and delivering care. Each term in the program builds on the last, with more intense testing and proficiency building.

The following are just a few components in the RCPs skill set:

- Directly managing highly technical mechanical ventilators to provide necessary life support for patients who are unable to sustain life on their own. These ventilators breathe for patients who cannot breathe for themselves or who need assistance to breathe.
- Understand the indications, hazards, contraindications, and dosages of prescription medications, including bronchodilators, antibiotics, Mucolytics, and steroids. These medications are provided to patients with lung disease such as Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).
- Assist the physician in diagnosing cardio-pulmonary disease by performing diagnostic procedures and patient assessment.
- Performs cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on patients of all ages whom are dying.

- Administer medical gases such as oxygen, nitric oxide and helium.
- Provide counseling to patients with cardio-pulmonary diseases.
- Work with critically ill patients in all intensive care units (ICUs).

Once a student graduates from the respiratory therapy program, the graduate can then sit for the credentialing examination provided by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC). **NOTE:** The NBRC does not regulate RCPs', but provides the credentialing examinations. It is the responsibility of the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to regulate who works as an RCP. The next step taken is to apply for a Texas License from the DSHS. Before obtaining a license, the DSHS will make sure the individual does not have a criminal history and all requirements to obtain the license and work as an RCP have been met.

There are numerous reasons to not deregulate RCPs'. Public health and safety is of greatest concern. Licensed RCPs' are direct patient care providers in a profession where extensive specialized skills and training are required and a significant potential risk of harm to the public exists from lack of training education and incompetence. Without the licensing requirement, hospitals and other patient care providers would not be required to hire individuals who met all the requirements described above. Additionally, individuals engaged in criminal activity, or have lost their license to practice in another state could work in Texas without any review or screening to protect the citizens of Texas.

My recommendation is not to deregulate RCPs', but for the Respiratory Care Practitioners program to either remain with the DSHS or to be transferred to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Nguyen Bui, Respiratory Therapy Student