

**TEXAS SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT – MAY 2014**

ACTION

Retain Licensure Requirements for Radiologic and Nuclear Medicine Technologists

The Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) asks that the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission reconsider their recommendation regarding the dissolution of the radiologic technologist licensure program. Most Americans assume the person performing their x-ray, nuclear medicine scan, or radiation therapy treatment is a competent professional. However, inadequately trained personnel perform medical imaging and radiologic procedures every day. Recently, events of radiation overexposure have been highlighted in the media. While rare, adverse events underscore the need for persistent steps to help make certain patients receive the safest, most appropriate care.

WHY LICENSURE IS IMPORTANT

It is imperative that the State of Texas continue the licensing and regulation of radiologic technologist.

- Licensure for radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists ensures that patients are being treated by individuals who have met education and certification standards.
- Licensed radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists administer ionizing radiation, a known carcinogen, in the lowest dose possible to patients to create medical images and to treat cancers and other illnesses. Unlicensed personnel do not have formalized education to administer low doses of radiation and still achieve quality images or effective treatments.
- Licensure for radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists preserves the state's right to provide disciplinary action for individuals who may not treat patients according to professional standards or administer radiation correctly. Without licensure, the state cannot protect its citizens from untrained individuals.
- Licensed radiologic technologists provide radiologists and other healthcare providers with technically consistent, correctly positioned images, which improve the consistency and accuracy of the providers' diagnosis. Unlicensed personnel increase the potential for inconsistent or improperly positioned images, reducing the diagnostic effectiveness of exams and increasing the need for repeat imaging procedures. Repeat imaging increases radiation exposure and medical costs.
- Licensed nuclear medicine technologists must inject patient with radioactive substances and adjunctive medications to illicit a specific physiologic or molecular response. These doses must be accurate and consistent with the provider's request. Unlicensed technologists increase the likelihood of errors but injecting the incorrect dose or radiopharmaceutical. A repeat exam is needed in these instances. This increases radiation exposure and medical costs.

- Licensed radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists adapt procedures and technical factors to each individual patient's needs. The radiologic and nuclear medicine technologists' training allows for technologists to evaluate the patient's medical status, patient's history, underlying pathologic processes, and physical factors to create a quality diagnostic image or therapy that is truly individualized for that patient.