

Opening Statement of the Honorable Joseph R. Pitts
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on "Examining the Appropriateness of Standards for
Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Technologists"
June 8, 2012

(As prepared for delivery)

Today we are addressing the quality of medical imaging and radiation therapy services and their impact on patient safety and cost.

I'm sure that many people would be surprised to learn that there are no uniform licensure standards for the technologists who perform tests such as MRIs and CT scans every day in our country.

Currently, radiologic technicians are regulated at the state level, and those standards can vary widely between states – from those with stringent standards to those that do not regulate the education or competency of these medical professionals at all.

Patient safety can be impacted by improper positioning or poor technique by the technician, which can lead to misreading of scans and a need for duplicate tests.

These tests cost Medicare billions of dollars every year, and we cannot afford to pay for multiple tests that should have been done right the first time.

I am a firm supporter of a bill by our colleague, Ed Whitfield, H.R. 2104, the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act, or the CARE Act.

This commonsense bill enjoys bipartisan support and has been the subject of three hearings in this subcommittee over the last few years.

It would direct the Secretary of HHS to establish minimum standards for personnel who perform, plan, evaluate, or verify patient dose for medical imaging examinations or radiation therapy procedures; establish a program for designating certification organizations after consideration of specified criteria; provide a process for the certification of individuals whose training or experience are determined to be equal to, or in excess of, those of a graduate of an accredited educational program; and publish a list of approved accrediting bodies for such certification organizations.

Medicare reimbursement will be contingent on meeting the minimum training standards.

I know that we have witnesses representing imaging and radiologic technicians here with us today. And I look forward to their insight and expertise in this area and their thoughts on the CARE Act.

I would like to thank our witnesses for being here, and I look forward to your testimony.

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