



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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April 5, 2017

Senator Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Re: S. 769, the Medicare Access to Radiology Care Act

Dear Senator Portman:

On behalf of The Ohio State University, Radiologic Sciences & Therapy Division, we are writing to urge you to co-sponsor S. 769 introduced by Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Robert Casey (D-PA). The Ohio State University is one of the premier programs in the country that offer this unique and high level training for radiology assistants at the Master's level. It is a vigorous curriculum that utilizes 13 faculty members, and not only has two years of classroom training, but also includes a year of preceptorship with a group of Radiologists in both community hospitals and radiology practices.

The RA is an advanced-level radiographer who assists, but does not replace, the radiologist in the diagnostic imaging environment. The RA must complete a rigorous academic program encompassing a nationally-recognized curriculum and a radiologist-directed clinical preceptorship and must pass a nationally recognized certification examination. An RA educational program must award a baccalaureate degree at a *minimum* and educate students to perform diagnostic imaging and interventional radiology procedures within the RA's scope of practice. Today, 31 states license or otherwise recognize RAs. I am proud to report that Ohio provides a license for RA through the Ohio Medical Bureau. An RA can be certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists as a registered radiologist assistant or by the Certification Board for Radiology Practitioner Assistants as a radiology practitioner assistant. RAs always practice under the on-site supervision of a radiologist, thus ensuring high quality care. Their advanced education and training enable them to perform assessments and procedures (excluding interpretations) that traditionally are performed by the radiologist.

This program not only helps attract some of the best and brightest from around the country, but also benefits the local community, as these elite students have the opportunity to practice and learn in the community at large, assisting patients and doctors. Unfortunately, because Medicare does not recognize RAs, there are few job opportunities available for graduates of our prestigious program, *so we have been forced to scale back the number of RAs that we train.* This is detrimental to the school and our graduate program, and the RAs who work hard to graduate with a Master's degree from our program. The RA program offers vital occupational mobility for more than 308,000 radiographers across the country including more than 14,000 in Ohio. **Finally, we believe that this short-changes patients who cannot receive the benefit of care from a highly trained RA, even if their state scope-of-practice laws permit an RA to work there.**

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In addition, **RAs can play a significant role in enabling Radiologists and provider organizations to meet quality measures under the new healthcare delivery models.** Medicare beneficiaries, including beneficiaries in rural and underserved areas, would have increased access to timely imaging services and diagnoses, which would yield improved health. Legislation is necessary to address Medicare's lack of recognition of the RA. RAs provide valuable services to patients which other radiographers simply are not trained to provide. RA jobs are at risk if Medicare continues to fail to recognize the occupation, which severely limits the contribution RAs can make to hospitals and Radiologists in Ohio.

We believe RAs have an essential function in providing safe and efficient care to patients. RAs are specially trained in radiation safety and image quality that affects diagnostic value. This training ensures the best possible image at the lowest possible radiation dose.

This legislation is a high priority for Ohio State and the radiology community, and we wholeheartedly endorse it. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely yours,



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