

ASSEMBLY REGULATED PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 32

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 5, 2020

The Assembly Regulated Professions Committee reports favorably Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 32.

This resolution would strongly urge the State Board of Medical Examiners (BME) to adopt rules and regulations, within one year after the resolution's effective date, as is necessary to allow radiologist assistants to practice in New Jersey. Radiologist assistants are advanced-level radiographers who improve patient access to timely radiologic care, and extend the capacity of radiologists in the diagnostic imaging environment, by performing patient assessment, patient management, fluoroscopy, and other radiology procedures under radiologist supervision, and by making initial observations of diagnostic images. They effectively reduce the workload of radiologists, and improve productivity and efficiency in the diagnostic imaging environment, by performing exams when a radiologist is not available, and by allowing radiologists to spend more time on image interpretation and diagnosis and the performance of invasive procedures that lie outside the scope of the assistant's practice.

The Radiological Society of New Jersey (RSNJ) and Rutgers University have each determined that it is appropriate to authorize radiologist assistants, as part of their scope of practice, to perform the following delegated procedures, which require the use of fluoroscopic equipment: esophageal study; swallowing function study; upper gastrointestinal study (UGI); small bowel study; barium enema (BE) lower gastrointestinal study; nasogastric/enteric and oroenteric/enteric tube placement; t-tube cholangiogram; chest fluoroscopy; hysterosalpingogram procedure and imaging; Antegrade Pyelogram; arthrogram, joint injection and aspiration; cystography or voiding cystourethrography (catheter placement); loopography; lumbar puncture with contrast; myelogram; abscess, fistula, sinus tract study; paracentesis; thoracentesis; venous access ports; tunneled and non-tunneled central venous catheters; tunneled and non-tunneled peripherally inserted central venous catheters; and tunneled and non-tunneled chest and abdominal drainage catheters.

In order to engage in practice as a radiologist assistant, a person must be licensed as a diagnostic radiologic technologist, and must additionally be certified by, and registered with, the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) as a radiologist assistant. A person may not become certified and registered as a

radiologist assistant, however, unless the person has first completed an ARRT-recognized educational program.

The Master of Science Radiologist Assistant Program, which is offered by Rutgers, the State University, at Newark, is one of only nine educational programs across the United States that has been recognized by the ARRT as being adequate for the purposes of radiologist assistant certification and registration. However, while New Jersey is one of the few states in the nation that provides sufficient education for radiologist assistant certification, and is one of only a few regular producers of professionals in this field, radiologist assistants are currently unable to practice in this State, because the BME has failed to appropriately define the parameters of this particular practice specialty.

Although the practice of radiologic technologists and radiologist assistants in New Jersey is primarily regulated by the Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners, in the Department of Environmental Protection, (hereafter referenced as the “DEP Radiologic Board”), the regulations adopted by the DEP Radiologic Board, in this respect, require certain additional regulatory actions to be undertaken by the BME before radiologist assistants will be authorized to practice in New Jersey. In particular, the Radiologic Board’s regulations specify that an ARRT-certified radiologist assistant in New Jersey will be authorized to perform procedures identified by the ARRT, but only if those procedures have been approved by the BME, and only if the radiologist assistant performs those procedures “under the level of radiologist supervision specified by the BME.” It does not appear, however, that the BME has taken appropriate regulatory action to adopt a list of approved procedures that may be undertaken by a radiologic assistant in accordance with the Radiologic Board’s authorizations, or to identify the level of radiologist supervision that is necessary for a radiologic assistant to perform such approved procedures. Without these BME regulations, the authorizations specified in the DEP Radiologic Board’s regulations are insufficient to allow a certified and registered radiologist assistant to practice in the State. Accordingly, in order to allow radiologist assistants to become incorporated into diagnostic imaging environments in New Jersey, and prevent properly educated radiologist assistants from being forced to seek employment in other states, it is necessary for the BME to adopt appropriate regulations in this area.

This resolution was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.