



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

Good Morning members of the Joint Committee on public health, I thank you for bringing this important legislation to public hearing, and for allowing me to speak in strong support of it.

My name is Martin Fraser, from Medford, MA, a lifelong resident of the Commonwealth and, for the past 32 years a practicing medical physicist in this state. I have worked in radiation therapy for my entire career, treating cancer patients from Lowell to Fall River. Ever since my studies at Northeastern and Lowell Graduate school and my early training at BU Medical Center I have recognized the difference that technical quality can make in the care and treatment of cancer patients. I've also come to realize that there is no substitute for preparation and training, particularly in highly technical specialties like modern Radiation Therapy.

Some years ago my own father developed prostate cancer. He was advised to undergo surgery, a procedure that was quite involved and accompanied by serious side effects like periodic incontinence. The surgery, though performed by a leading urologic surgeon at a major Boston hospital proved ultimately unsuccessful; his cancer returned less than 5 years later. He then opted for Radiation Therapy, receiving a then relatively new and highly technical procedure called Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT), which eradicated the cancer and gave him a new lease on life. IMRT was in the news last year, you may recall, in the landmark New York Times article, which documented the serious mistreatments and huge overdose in an IMRT treatment when proper physics procedures were not followed. This is the sort of event that can occur in if unqualified, undertrained physicists are permitted to practice. We certainly don't want preventable mistreatments to occur in our state.

The public cannot be expected to grasp the significance of medical physicists' credentials, nor should they have to. Families with a loved one undergoing cancer therapy shouldn't have to concern themselves with whether the technical staff are objectively qualified to perform the service, and with the **Board of Medical Physics** in place they will not have to.

In my volunteer work for the American College of Radiology I am responsible for accreditation inspections of radiotherapy facilities across the country and I have visited many remarkable facilities, but I have ALSO had the sobering experience of reviewing facilities where the staff were not adequately trained, nor properly credentialed and the procedures were inadequate to insure good, effective results. Such facilities were denied accreditation, but nothing stopped their physics staff from continuing in their poor practice, or worse leaving that facility for another unsuspecting clinic. I don't want on of those negligent individuals to be free to practice in my state.

I come before you not only as a 32 year veteran of clinical practice, Past President of the New England Medical Physics chapter (NEAAPM), or past member of the MA Governor's Advisory Council on Radiation Protection, I present myself as a member of the Executive Board of the Massachusetts Radiological Society, the State professional society of Radiologists, Radiation Oncologists and Medical Physicists. I can report that my Executive committee has strongly and unanimously endorsed this bill and has asked me to speak to you on their behalf. I have a formal letter of endorsement signed by the society president Dr. Christopher Wald from the Lahey Clinic. I hope you will consider the recommendation of this widely respected professional body, and those of the leading practitioners before you today and recommend passage of this important bill.

Thank you for your time and kind attention.

Martin W. Fraser, MS, DABR, FACR
Chief Medical Physicist
Mt Auburn Hospital
Cambridge, MA