

Abstract

The CARE Bill – What It Is, Its History, and Its Current Status

The past 30 years have seen remarkable growth in the complexity and capability of radiological imaging and radiation therapy. The corresponding education and training necessary to provide quality medical imaging and radiation therapy has increased in quantity and narrowed in scope. To ensure quality of care, there is a need for the standardization of the training and experience requirements for those involved radiological imaging and radiation therapy. The CARE bill (The Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence Act) is a response to this need. The CARE bill is a bi-partisan bill which has been submitted to both the U.S. House of Representatives (HR1214, sponsored by Representative Heather Wilson with 89 co-sponsors) and the U.S. Senate (S1197, named the RADCare Bill, sponsored by Senator Michael Enzi with 10 co-sponsors). The Bill itself is an amendment to the Consumer-Patient Radiation Health and Safety Act of 1981 and has received bi-partisan support. The Alliance for Quality Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (AQMIRT), of which the AAPM is a charter member, is the originator of the bill. The Alliance consists of a coalition of 17 professional groups dedicated to the provision of safe, high quality radiological care. As previously stated, the primary purpose of this bill is to establish educational and training standards for the major technical, clinical professions involved in either the actual application or in the planning/dose measurement of medical imaging and/or radiation therapy. The educational and training standards to be established by the act are specific to each of the professions. The bill itself is not a licensure bill. Currently, there remain significant differences between the House and Senate versions. The history of this bill along with the content, ramification, and differences between the House and Senate versions, and current status of the bills will be discussed.

Educational Objectives:

1. Understand the purpose of the CARE Bill.
2. Understand the role of the AAPM in AQMIRT.
3. Understand the differences between the Senate and House versions of the CARE bill.
4. Understand the potential ramifications of the bill.