

AAMD Response to the New York times Article

January 29, 2010

AAMD President Theresa Kwiatkowski, CMD, submitted the following letter to the editor of the New York Times in response to the January 24, 2010 article on radiation therapy errors.

January 29, 2010

Editor of the New York Times,

It saddens me to read the recent articles concerning the medical errors that have been in the headlines. The American Association of Medical Dosimetrists believes that an integral part of safe and effective patient care is the assurance that all persons who perform medical imaging examinations, or plan and deliver radiation therapy treatments, meet a minimum education and credentialing standard.

To that point, individuals who have been properly educated and credentialed stand a greater chance of catching medical errors before the treatment machines are turned on or the diagnostic images have been acquired. We are all human and, unfortunately, human error will occur in any profession. But with the proper tools of education and credentialing, we can hopefully achieve the important goal of avoiding medical errors. We are in an unfortunate position that very few states have any kind of licensure governing who may plan, check and administer radiation therapy or medical imaging. There are many more states which mandate that individuals in other professions meet minimum standards and maintain a license to perform the duties they are trained for. How can we not mandate that individuals caring for our lives do the same? The people of this great country should not leave the task of policing individuals who work in these medical fields to their employer and the varying standards those employers demand. Contact your Congressional representatives and demand they support and pass the C.A.R.E. bill (Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act). In the meantime, patients and their families should ask the question to their medical provider: "Is your staff credentialed to perform procedures on me or my family member?"

The AAMD is an international society established to promote and support the Medical Dosimetry profession. Medical Dosimetrists are part of the radiation oncology team and have responsibilities including the design of radiation treatment plans for cancer patients who have decided, along with their physicians, to undergo radiation therapy for their disease.

Sincerely,



Theresa M. Kwiatkowski, CMD
President, AAMD

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Comments are moderated to ensure that they are on topic. Remember you must log on and agree to comply with the Guidelines before posting a comment. The AAMD is not able to respond to every comment that is posted.