

Report of Findings and Recommendations  
By the  
Board of Health  
on the Application for Credentialing  
of the  
Nebraska Society for Radiologic Technology  
to the  
Director of Health  
and the  
Nebraska Legislature

December 15, 1986



## Introduction

The Nebraska Regulation of Health Professions Act created a three-tier process for the review of proposals pertaining to the credentialing of health occupations. These three tiers are the technical review committees, the Board of Health, and the Director of Health. The Board of Health reviews specific proposals for credentialing only after the technical committees have completed their reports on these proposals. After the Board completes its reports on the proposals, these reports, and those of the technical committees are presented to the Director of Health, who in turn prepares his own report on them. All reports are submitted to the Legislature for its consideration.

Each of these three review bodies issues reports that represent the advice of their membership on the proposals in question. Each report is a separate, independent response to the proposals, and is in no way dependent upon the reports that have preceded it.

The Board of Health reviews credentialing proposals only after receiving a preliminary recommendation on each proposal from an advisory committee selected from its own membership. This committee met on October 31, 1986, in order to give the full board its advice on the proposal of the radiologic technologists. The full Board of Health met on November 17, 1986, and formulated its own, independent report on this proposal. The following pages constitute the body of this report.



### Recommendations

In their application the Nebraska Society of Radiologic Technologists sought a two-tier system of licensure for those radiographers meeting standards set forth in their proposal. The technical committee recommended that this system of licensure be granted to the applicants by the Nebraska Legislature. However, the Board of Health recommends that legislation regulating radiologic technologists not be enacted at this time. The Board recommends that the Department of Health gather evidence on the x-ray machines that are currently in operation in clinics, physicians' offices, and hospitals throughout Nebraska in order to ascertain what percentage of these machines are defective. The Board requests that the Department formulate recommendations to the Legislature as to how best to deal with any equipment problems identified by the above-mentioned investigation.

### Discussion

The Board discussed the three criteria of the Nebraska Regulation of Health Professions Act as they pertain to the radiologic technology proposal. In the discussion of the first criterion, Board members disagreed amongst themselves as to the extent of harm to the public inherent in the current practice situation of radiologic technology. Those Board members who perceived harm to the public in the current practice situation expressed a concern for quality assurance as regards radiologic technology. They stated that the public should get good quality for the high cost of medical care that people must pay today. In their judgment the way to assure this in the area of radiologic technology is by credentialing radiologic technologists. One Board member stated that the credentialing of radiologic technologists would

be assurance against harm. He expressed concern that there be assurance that those who run x-ray machines are qualified to perform their jobs. The protection of the public from unnecessarily high amounts of radiation depends on qualified x-ray technologists.

Some Board members felt that the applicant group did not demonstrate that significant harm is being done to the public due to the unregulated practice of radiologic technology. This Board member stated that much of the evidence of harm presented by the applicant group was anecdotal in nature, and that public policy should not be based upon anecdotal evidence. Other Board members stated that radiologic technologists are already regulated by a private association, and are adequately supervised in their practice situations by medical doctors.

The Board voted nine to four in favor of a motion that the unregulated practice of radiologic technology can clearly harm the public health and welfare, and that the potential for harm is not remote or dependent upon tenuous argument. Voting aye were Schneider, Rhoades, Kenney, Quinn, Powell, Clark, Coleman, Nelson, and Bartels. Voting nay were Schenken, Masek, Adickes, and Hilkemann. Absent were Gilmore and Brown-Arfmann. By this action the Board determined that there was harm to the public inherent in the current practice situation.

The Board did not formally discuss the second criterion. The Board voted thirteen to zero in favor of a motion that the public needs and can reasonably be expected to benefit from an assurance of initial and continuing professional ability in the area of radiologic technology.

The discussion on the third criterion focused on the cost-effectiveness of the proposal and of various alternatives to the proposal. A majority of the Board members were concerned about the

costs associated with establishing the administrative machinery to enforce licensure for radiologic technologists. These costs would include start-up costs associated with creating a new board of examiners. One Board member expressed concern that some of the expenses associated with licensure of radiologic technologists might be passed along to the general public in the form of higher costs for x-ray services.

Several Board members were concerned that the proposal might adversely affect public access to radiological services in rural areas of Nebraska. They stated that the cost to rural health care facilities of providing these services might increase as a result of this proposal. Some rural health care facilities might shut down their x-ray services completely because of the costs associated with being required to hire a licensed radiologic technologist to do x-ray work.

Several Board members stated that the costs associated with credentialing radiologic technologists for the most part would be covered by licensure fees. They stated that any costs of the proposal to the public would be negligible, and would be a small price to pay for the protection of public health that credentialing would provide.

Several Board members believed that more information is needed on the condition of x-ray equipment in Nebraska. It was their belief that most problems with the practice situation of radiologic technology were equipment problems rather than problems with the operators of the x-ray machines. One Board member questioned whether public protection might not better be served by strengthening the inspection system already in place in the Health Department's Division of Radiologic Health. This

course of action might also be more cost-effective than would the credentialing of radiologic technologists.

The Board voted seven to six against a motion which stated that the public cannot be protected in a more cost-effective manner than by the credentialing of radiologic technologists. Voting aye were Schneider, Kenney, Quinn, Powell, Coleman, and Bartels. Voting nay were Rhoades, Schenken, Masek, Clark, Adickes, Nelson, and Hilkemann. Gilmore and Brown-Arfmann were absent.

There was no discussion on the levels of credentialing because the Board by its action on the third criterion had decided not to recommend the credentialing of radiologic technologists at this time.