

The CARE Bill (S. 1042 / H.R. 583)

Letter Writing Fact Sheet

Reminders in Congressional Letter Writing

1. Be brief, to the point, and check for grammar and spelling mistakes.
2. Always try to be positive and constructive (never threaten or demand anything).
3. Write your own letter. Just signing a copy of someone else's letter lessens credibility.
4. Feel free to describe personal experiences relating the need for quality standards (but be careful not to reveal confidential patient information and avoid using names).
5. When using the term "sonographer," make sure to explain what that means. Members of Congress and their staff members may be unfamiliar with the title.
6. If you are writing to several Members of Congress, make sure that the letter you send is addressed to the correct congressional office.
7. Fax the letter to your Representative or Senator, because security screening of mail creates long delays in delivery. (See <http://www.house.gov> or <http://www.senate.gov> for the fax number).

Key Points in Congressional Letters on the CARE Bill

1. CARE = Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act of 2007
2. The CARE bill takes an important step towards improving the quality of ultrasounds.
3. A successful ultrasound exam is dependent on the skill and experience of the operator (known as a sonographer).
4. Without a certain level of skill and experience, someone performing an ultrasound exam can unintentionally make a blocked artery look clear or even a healthy fetus appear damaged.
5. Currently, there are no federal rules establishing a minimum level of training and experience to perform ultrasounds.
6. There are no state rules or laws that require training and experience to perform ultrasounds, except in California where rules exist only for prenatal ultrasound.
7. There appears to be a trend developing with private insurance companies to require for reimbursement that an ultrasound exam be performed in an accredited laboratory or by a sonographers (or ultrasound professional) who has a minimum level of training and experience, yet there are no such requirements for patients covered by federal programs.
8. The CARE bill ensures a minimum level of quality in ultrasounds that are reimbursed by federal health programs.
9. Sadly, there are typically more rules governing massage therapists and hair stylists than those performing potentially life saving ultrasounds.
10. The CARE bill is expected to (1) reduce the cost and patient inconvenience of repeat exams, (2) improve the ability of physicians to make accurate diagnoses, and (3) encourage new quality standards in ultrasound exams paid for by state and private health insurance programs, both of which tend to follow the example of federal health programs.
11. Please cosponsor and support passage of the CARE bill, S.1042 (Senate) or H.R. 583 (House) this year!