

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: SB 480
AUTHOR: Archuleta
BILL DATE: January 14, 2020, Amended
SUBJECT: Radiologist Assistant Advisory Committee
SPONSOR: American Registry of Radiologic Technologists
POSITION: Oppose

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT LEGISLATION:

This bill would require the Medical Board of California (Board) to establish a Radiologist Assistant Advisory Committee (RA Committee), as specified, for the purpose of identifying the appropriate training, qualifications, and scope of practice for individual providing assistance to radiologists.

BACKGROUND:

Existing law defines a medical assistant (MA) as a person at least 18 years of age who may be unlicensed, who performs basic administrative, clerical, and technical supportive services, as specified, for a licensed physician and surgeon or a licensed podiatrist, a physician or podiatrist group, a medical or podiatry corporation, a physician assistant, a nurse practitioner, a certified nurse midwife or for a health care service plan.

Existing law provides the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Radiologic Health Branch (RHB) with the responsibility for administering and enforcing the Radiologic Technology Act (RT Act). Existing law requires CDPH to approve radiologic technologists (RT) schools, to certify RTs who satisfactorily completed a course in an approved RT school, and prohibits individuals other than those certified by CDPH to use the designation "certified RT." Existing law establishes a certification committee (RT Committee) in CDPH to assist, advise, and make recommendations to CDPH on regulations.

The Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee analysis includes the following background information: "According to information provided by the Sponsors, RAs, include individuals registered with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (known as RRAs) and individuals certified by the Certification Board for Radiology Practitioner Assistants (RPAs). According a 2014 article in the journal Radiologic Technology (the scholarly journal of the American Society of RTs), compared with the careers of physician assistants and nurse practitioners, the RA is relatively new to the field of medicine, with the first training programs developed in the 1970s and the first advanced practice imaging program developed in 1996. Discussions among the American College of Radiology, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, and the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists culminated in a

2003 consensus statement that defined a RA as an advanced level RT who works under the supervision of a radiologist by assisting in the diagnostic imaging setting, including performing patient assessment, patient management, and certain imaging procedures. RAs do not interpret radiologic examinations. These are in essence advance practice RTs with additional educational training and commensurate additional certification beyond that obtained as a RT. Some states in turn allow for expanded practice authority through licensure of RAs that reflects this more advanced level of training, experience, and passage of a certification examination.“

ANALYSIS:

This bill would require the Board to establish the RA Committee to identify the appropriate training, qualifications, and scope of practice for individual providing assistance to radiologists. This bill would require the RA committee to be composed of the following: two members of the Board, appointed by the Board; one member of CDPH's RT Committee, appointed by CDPH; one representative from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), appointed by CDVA; two radiologists, appointed by the Governor; two certified RTs, appointed by the Governor; two representatives of a RT training program or a RA training program, appointed by the Governor; one member appointed by the Assembly; and one member appointed by the Senate.

This bill would require the RA Committee to research and recommend potential statutory changes to grant expanded practice authority to certified RTs or MAs working under the supervision of a radiologist by doing all of the following: 1. Analyzing the effectiveness of MAs and the practice of RAs; 2. Determining the appropriateness of specialty MA licensure; 3. Determining any necessary revisions to regulations to promote workforce development in the fields and ensure patient access to services; 4. Evaluating the regulatory recognition of RAs in other states, if appropriate; and 5. Evaluating where equivalencies in military training and experience exist and where the transfer of skills gained through military service may be utilized in determining the requirements for work in radiographic technology, including as an RA, and in the MA field.

This bill would specify that members of the RA Committee are required to serve without compensation. This bill would require the RA Committee to submit a report that includes the research and recommendations required by this bill to the Board, the Governor, and the Legislature on or before January 1, 2022. This bill would require the RA Committee to serve in an advisory capacity, but the Board and CDPH must adopt regulations to implement relevant recommendations and information contained in the report required by this bill.

This bill would be repealed on January 1, 2023.

Requiring a new advisory committee in the Board to research and identify the scope of practice for individuals providing assistance to radiologists is not an appropriate function for the Board. The Board currently does not look at the scope of individuals who provide

assistance to any type of physician specialty, and there are many different physician specialty assistants in California that may seek similar legislation if this bill were to pass. The Board already has regulations in place for medical assistants, who can provide technical and supportive services to all physicians. In addition, the Board does not have oversight over any radiologic health licensees; these individuals are currently licensed by CDPH's Radiologic Health Branch. It may be confusing for the Board to take the lead on radiologist assistants, while CDPH has oversight over all other radiologic health licensees. For these reasons, the Board has taken an oppose position on this bill.

FISCAL: The bill will result in additional workload to the Board to coordinate the membership of the task force and the meetings, as well as to work with the task force on the required research and the legislative report that is required that must include specified recommendations. The Board is estimating that it will need .5 limited term AGPA, with ongoing costs per year until January 2023 (when the bill is repealed) of \$57,000 per year.

SUPPORT: American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (Sponsor)
California Radiological Society

OPPOSITION: California Nurses Association/National Nurses United
Medical Board of California

ATTACHMENT: [SB 480, Archuleta. Radiologist Assistant Advisory Committee.](#)