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News from the MRS

THE REPORT

Fall 2022 | Issue 19

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CURRENT AND FUTURE STAFFING NEEDS IN RADIOLOGY

FALL 2022 | ISSUE 19

Author: Mark Weiss, MD, FACR

The current state of the medical workforce in the United States is concerning. Physicians are working harder and being asked to do more, for less compensation. CMS is required to be budget neutral, resulting in funds being reallocated in such a way to keep the total budget allocated the same year to year. If more cardiac catheterizations are being performed, the cost per cardiac catheterization must be decreased or the funds must be reallocated from other specialties or other areas of cardiology. The same is true for imaging. Radiology is being asked to interpret more images and more studies at the same or usually reduced compensation per study. For radiologists to maintain their income, productivity has had to increase.

Certainly, technology has been useful in improving radiologist productivity over the last two decades. However, technology can only do so much before humans are saturated and cannot be more productive. I believe we have reached that plateau in radiology. PAC's, voice recognition and workstations have improved radiology efficiency significantly over the last 20 years. The next technological advancement will most certainly arrive in the form of Artificial Intelligence (AI); however, this technology is not quite ready for prime time.

In the meanwhile, the volumes in radiology are increasing and radiologist burnout is evident both in our colleagues and ourselves. I am making an assumption and an association, and I want to be transparent, as there is no way for me to know if burnout has anything to do with volumes read by any individual radiologist. I am not a psychiatrist nor a mental healthcare professional, however it does not take a trained mental health professional to see the stress on the faces of our healthcare workers.

Burn-out is included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon. It is not classified as a medical condition.

Burn-out is defined in ICD-11 as follows:

"Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.

However, it is difficult to understand how work-related emotional issues do not spill over into personal life.

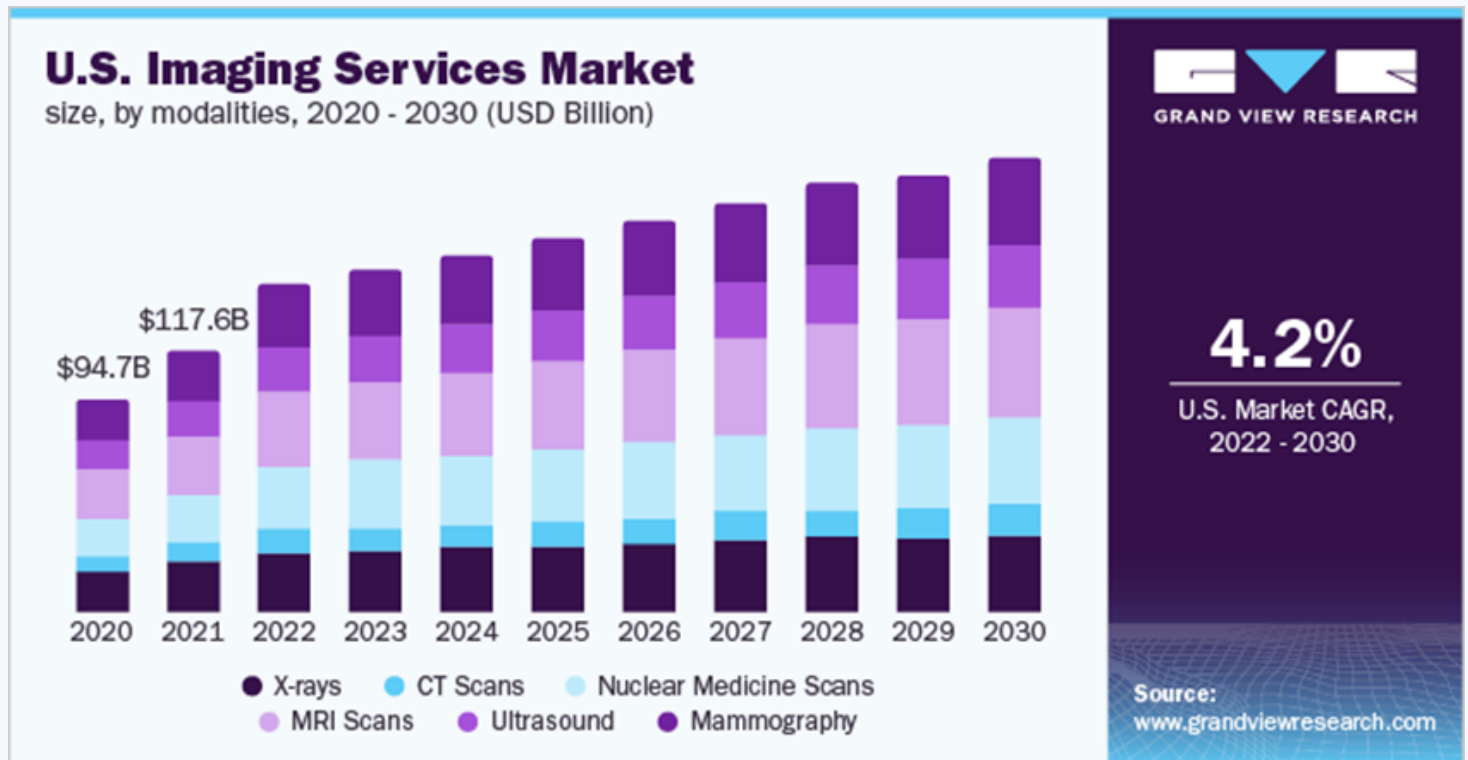
I personally believe a distinct part of burn-out is being overworked; much is demanded of radiologists and a feeling of "being underappreciated" by our colleagues and patients is a problem throughout medicine. This is an opinion not a fact. I am not sure anyone knows why physicians or healthcare professionals burn out.

I would like to provide some statistical information as "food for thought." Statistics, in my opinion, are facts. How they are interpreted is not a fact, but conjecture based on our own personal biases and life experiences. Most of the data I will be providing has been provided by the ACR or peer reviewed literature.

Facts:

1. There are approximately 30,000 full time equivalent radiologists in the USA. (This data is a bit dated, and the actual number of radiologists may be around 33,000. This would include full- and part-time radiologists. Full-time equivalent radiologist work approximately 50-hour work week.)
2. 15%-20% are in academic practices. Not necessarily academic radiologists just employed by academic centers.
3. Retired data and age for years 2019 through 2021: (ACR data)
 - 2019 – 177 retired – Average age 67.7
 - 2020 – 120 retired – Average age 68
 - 2021 – 197 retired – Average age 67.8
 - Average age for all three years: 67.8
- Interesting statistic, in 1986 the average radiologist retired at 62 years of age if my memory serves me correctly. This is not unexpected. Other fields have shown an uptick in retirement age.

4.



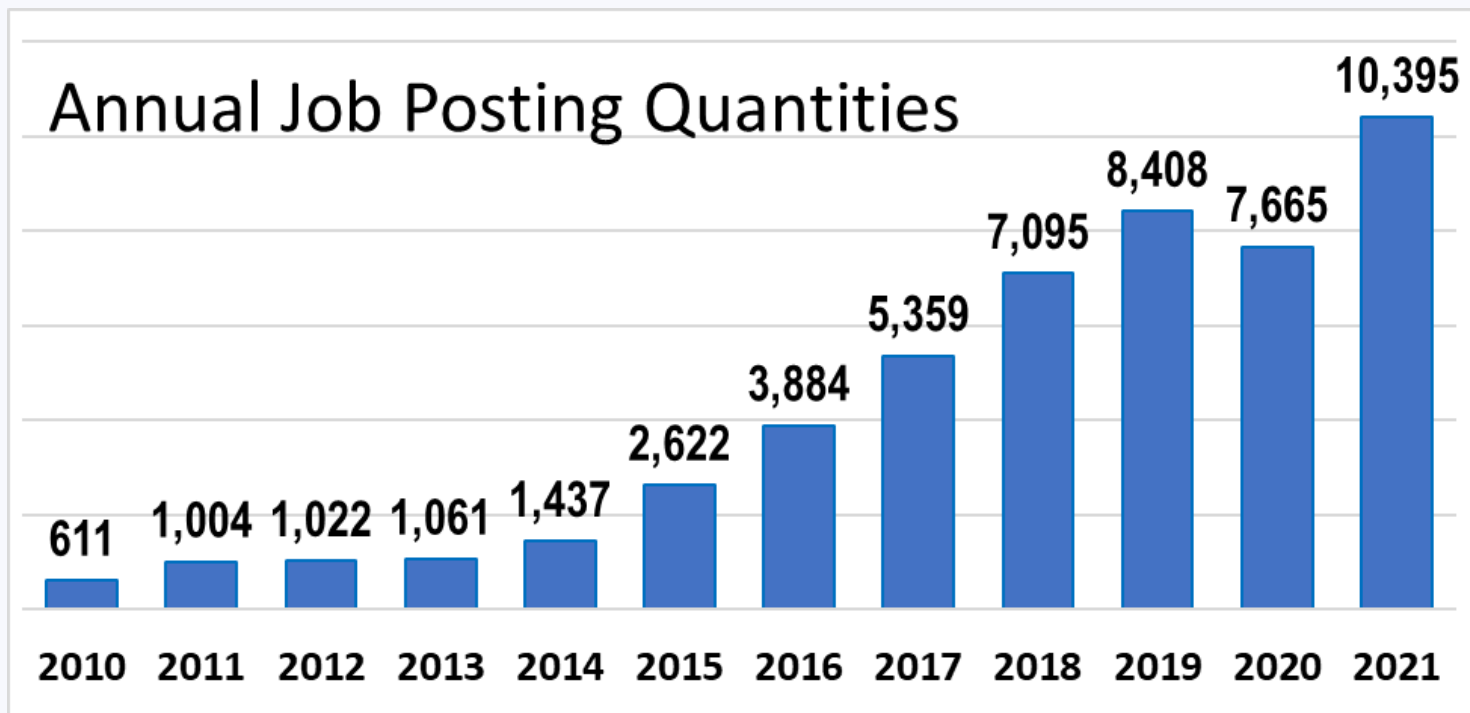
Assuming the above information is correct and there is a 4.2% annual increase in volume in radiology, there should also be a 4.2% increase in the number of radiologists to interpret all the studies. This assumes no significant increase in productivity per radiologist. Assuming there are 30,000 radiologists in the USA and a 4.2% increase in volume, this would suggest a needed increase of 1,260 additional radiologists per year, compounded year after year. The retirement rate in the U.S. for physicians in general is approximately 3.25% per year. Assuming radiologists retire at a slightly lower rate than average, which is likely the case, the number being closer to 2.5%, that would result in 750 radiologists retiring per year (30,000 x 0.025 = 750).

Mortality rate is typically expressed in deaths per 1000. The 2020 estimated U.S. death rate is 8.3 per 1000 which results in approximately 250 deaths per year for radiologists ($8.3/1000 \times 30,000 = 249$). We assume that most of these radiologists are retired but let's just be conservative and say that 50 out of the 250 fatalities are working radiologists.

As of October 2022, there are 1,733 active ACR Job postings. There are numerous other postings in subspecialty journals and societies. Again, being conservative and assuming that only 800 of the postings are valid or not duplicated or could be filled under the right circumstances, the resultant deficit in the U.S. as of this date is at least 800 radiologists. However, by the end of this year, due to retirement and mortality, that number will increase to over 1600 physicians. This number is probably very conservative, and the true number is much larger. By the end of 2023 that number will have increased by at least another 800 FTE simply by retirement and mortality. In addition, the 4.2 % increase in volume is compounded resulting in an additional 35 FTE shortage which will continue to grow in the following years. Within 5 years the deficit of radiology from retirement, growth in volume and natural deaths will result in landmark shortages of radiologists.

In addition, the number of new graduates will remain constant.

5. Trends in ACR Career Center Job Posting Quantities:



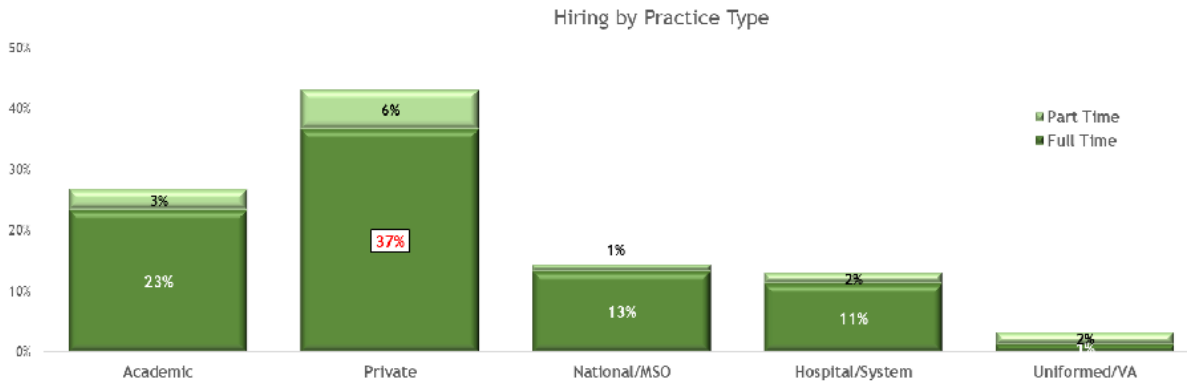
This chart is very interesting. In 2021 there were over 10,000 job postings. There may not be 10,000 unfilled positions, however, the trend is clearly leaning to a demand which is not met by supply. There is an old saying in business - "vacuums in the real world do not exist." If there is a demand and it cannot be addressed, someone will rise to the occasion to satisfy demand. I am not certain this applies in medicine, however there are other specialties which may welcome the opportunity to interpret their own studies if radiologists are not able to perform this task.

6.

American College of Radiology®

Private Practices Hired the Largest Proportion of both Full Time and Part Time Radiologists Hired in 2021

- Of the total share of Radiologists hired in 2021 nearly **4 in 10** were hired in **Full Time** positions in **Independent Private Practice**
- **Private Practice** also hired the largest share of **Part Time** Radiologists (6%)
- **Academic Practices** represented **26%** of the total Radiologist hired in 2021 (Full Time – 23%, Part Time - 3%)
- While **Private Practices** represented the greatest share of **radiologists hired**, **Academic Practices** hired **significantly*** more radiologists per practice (3.5 on Average) than Private Practice (1.58 on Average), Hospital/Hospital Systems (1.48 on Average) and Uniform VA (1 on Average)
- Only **Uniform/VA** practices hired more **Part Time** Radiologists than **Full Time** Radiologists (Part Time – 2%, Full Time – 1%)



Base: Fully qualified respondents (All Answering) (n=376)
 Q. How many physicians did your practice hire in 2021? - Full-time & Part Time hires.

*Measures in Red are significantly higher at a 95% confidence level

The above Chart provides interesting information and is worth sharing.

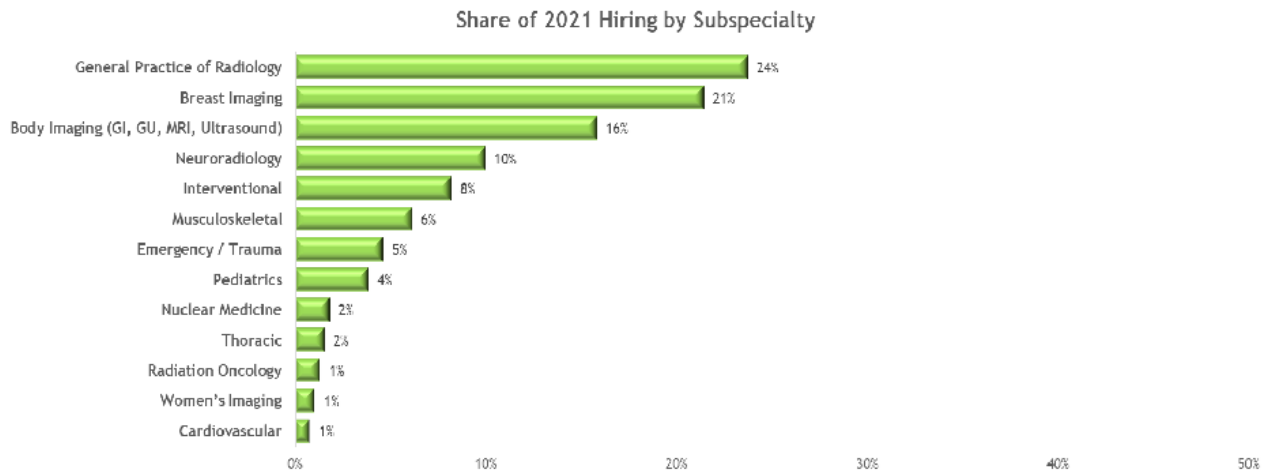
The next few slides also provide interesting information, however, not necessarily insightful with respect to burnout of stressors.

7.

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General Radiologists Represent One-Quarter of Radiologists Hired in 2021

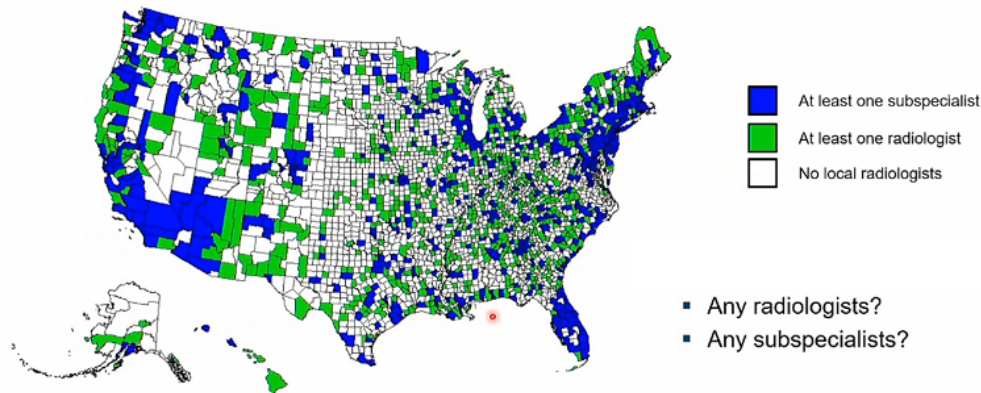
- **Breast Imagers** account for **21%** of the Radiologists hired in 2021
- **Body Imagers** and **Neuroradiologists** account for more than **1 in 10 Hires** each (16% and 10%, respectively)



Base: Establishments (N=229)
 Q. Of the ... physicians you hired in 2021, how many were in each of the sub-specialties below? - # of Hires in 2021 who work at least 50% of time in sub-specialty

8.

Radiologist Supply by County



Rosenkrantz, A. A County-Level Analysis of the US Radiologist Workforce: JACR. 15. 10.1016, 2018

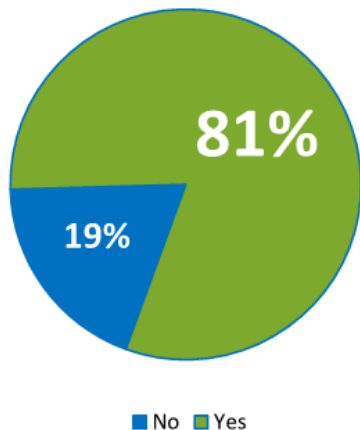


This slide shows a national picture of radiologists by county. As one can see there are vast areas that do not have any radiologists. The white spaces reflect areas that do not have any radiologists. This may not be important; however, it may play an important political narrative for other specialists or nurse practitioners etc. who want to obtain privileges to interpret imaging.

9

Most Employers Are Seeking Fellowship-Trained New Hires

Required or Preferred Subspecialty

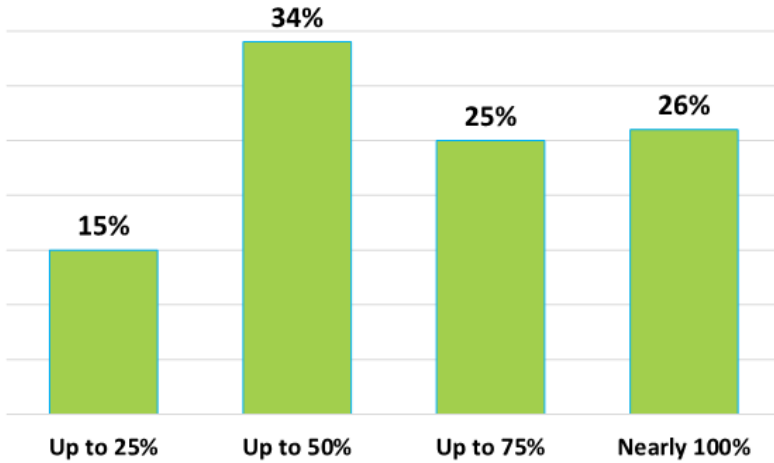


10.

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Fellowship Training Used Once Hired

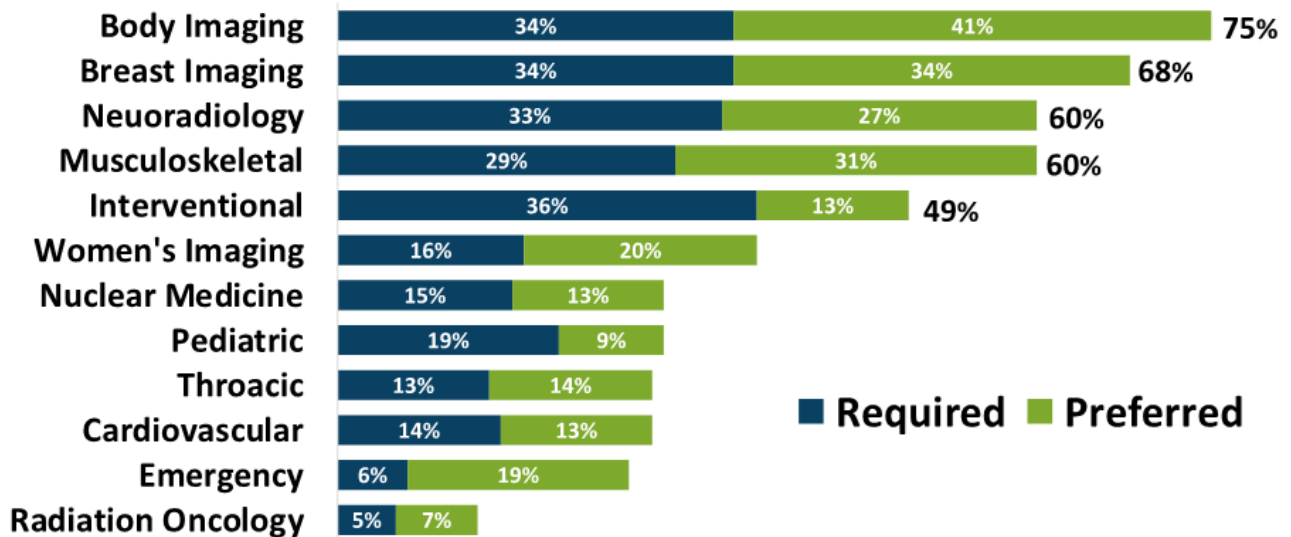
Percentage of Work Day Utilizing the Subspecialty Training



11.

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Top Subspecialties In Recent ACR Career Center Job Postings



12. Demographics of radiologists in the USA.

1. Those under 35 represent between 12-18% of the workforce
2. Those 35-45 represent between 31-33% of the workforce
3. Those 46-55 represent between 18-22% of the workforce
4. Those 56-65 represent between 15-19% of the workforce
5. Those 65+ represent 16-17% of the workforce

I found the above data to be very fascinating and it will be referred to in a follow up article.

- 16% of radiologists are over the age of 65. (4,800 radiologists)
- If one combines the 55 and the over radiologist with the 65 and over, nearly 1/3 of radiologists are over the age of 55. (15% + 16%= 31% to 36%) That is a staggering number. (9,300 radiologist are over the age of 55.)

I hope the data presented in this article is interesting. The interpretation of the data will most certainly vary tremendously. Some may view this as job security and a welcome change in the job market after the tumultuous 2010-2015 job market data.

Others may view this data as job insecurity. Physician assistants, RPA'S, DNP, and other specialist may perceive this as an opportunity to expend their own scope of practice and potentially increase their own income. As I stated earlier, interesting "food for thought."

I will explore opinions and interpretation of the data and how it may or may not be related to job satisfaction and burnout in a follow up article.

Mark Weiss M.D., FACR,
President,
Michigan Radiological Society



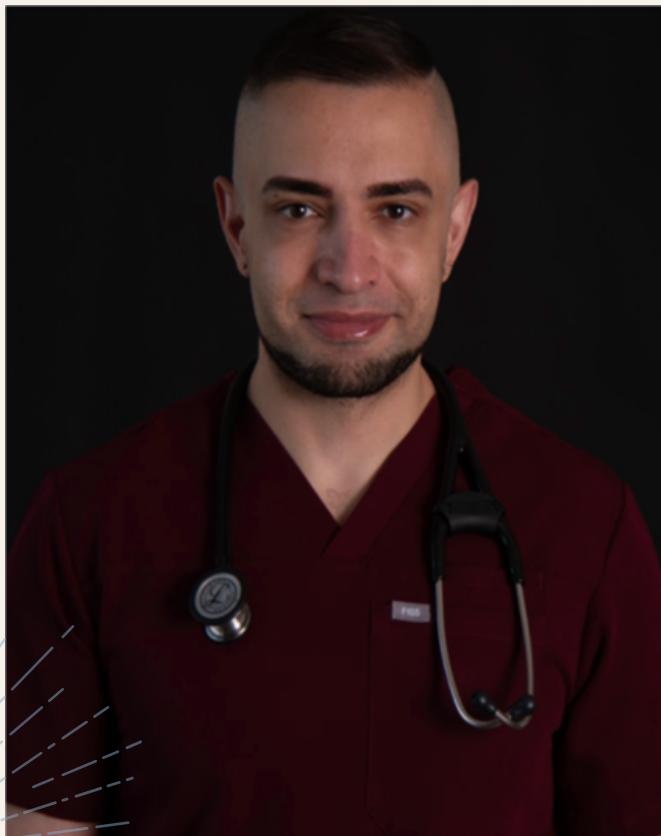
Thank You for Giving!

WHEN YOU GIVE, YOU MAKE IT
POSSIBLE FOR US TO GIVE.

Through your giving, the Michigan Radiological Society Foundation can carry out the educational and charitable interests of the Michigan Radiological Society. The generosity of our donors is key to our future and achieving our mission.

Because the MRS Foundation is local we are focused on Michigan Residents, Fellows, and early career Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists.

Let us introduce a recent recipient of a Scholarship funded by the MRS Foundation through the MRS Medical Student Section. The Scholarship helped provide funding for a medical student to attend the 2022 ACR Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.



Davit Meliksetyan, Medical Student, Oakland University Beaumont School of Medicine (Class of 2024). Davit has been associated with MRS, as a student liaison since his first year in medical school. He has attended multiple MRS events and presented at some of them. "I was very thankful to get the MRS Scholarship to attend the ACR with your Chapter. It was a very informative conference, additionally I have met many program directors and wonderful mentors through my association with MRS. Anyone who gets that opportunity is very blessed and fortunate."

Davit has a keen interest in technology and medicine, making radiology a perfect fit for him. He is a third-year medical student who will be applying for residencies in the not-too-distant future. He intends to apply to radiology and hopes to stay in Michigan to practice.

Davit is one of many medical students in Michigan we have opportunity to support and invest in through the MRS Foundation.

Another opportunity to support medical students occurred during the 2022 MRS Medical Student Symposium. The MRS Foundation awarded Amazon Gift Cards to the following students who made winning presentations during that event:

Colby Foster,

UMich, College of Medicine (Class of 2023)

Lucas Weingartz,

CMU, College of Medicine (Class of 2023)

Olivia Everin,

MSU, College of Medicine (Class of 2023)

Lauren Hoff,

UMich, College of Medicine (Class of 2023)

Gabriel Swenson,

CMU, College of Medicine (Class of 2023)

On behalf of the Foundation, we congratulate all these students for a job well done! Our investment in the lives of these medical students and others like them, is made possible through your generosity. Supporting them is the hallmark of our mission and helps encourage our local medical students in their radiology journey and beyond.

If you have already donated, we thank you and ask your continued support to the MRS Foundation with your generous gifts. If you have never donated, we hope you will invest in the future of radiology and the mission of the MRS foundation by giving today!

There are many ways you can donate to the MRS Foundation. By simply clicking on the Donate Now button below or by visiting our website at www.michigan-rad.org/foundation to learn other ways you can give.

The MRS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all gifts are tax deductible.

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OVERVIEW

All of Michigan's statewide constitutional offices face election this year. After winning the Republican primary for Governor, businesswoman Tudor Dixon selected former State Representative Shane Hernandez of Port Huron as her running mate, and the convention ratified that choice. Incumbent Governor Gretchen Whitmer will head the Democratic Party ticket. The incumbent Governor currently holds a significant lead in the polls, and Democrats are hoping she will have coattails long enough to give them a majority in the State House and Senate.



James Cavanagh, JD
MRS Lobbyist

Senate Democrats are optimistic about gaining the majority in that Chamber for the first time in 38 years. An independent citizen's commission reapportioned districts, making them much more competitive. At least at this time, most experts agree that the Republicans are still favored to win the majority in the House of Representatives, but it will be competitive. Republicans are so concerned about their majority that they have cancelled several session days that were to take place prior to the election in order to get their members facing re-election out on the campaign trail.

"Lame duck" session is scheduled to begin right after the November General Election and last until December 15.

LEGISLATION

Nurses Seek to Practice Radiology:

SB 680, sponsored by Sen. Rick Outman, (R-Six Lakes) would establish the category of "certified nurse practitioners" (CNP) in statute and would greatly expand their scope of practice. The bill allows a CNP to determine a diagnosis, which is, in essence, the practice of medicine. The bill also allows CNPs to prescribe pharmacological and non-pharmacological "interventions and treatments" that are within their specialty role. Finally, the bill allows CNPs to supervise others and to order, perform, supervise and interpret laboratory and imaging studies. Clearly, this is the practice of medicine and radiology.

MRS has been working with MSMS and other physician specialty organizations to defeat this bill. The bill is still with the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Meantime, representatives of the nurses and the Wayne State University School of Nursing have engaged in a series of work group meetings in an effort to reach a compromise which at this point, given the aspirations of the nurses, is unattainable. We will be keeping close tabs on this legislation during lame duck. In any event, look for a reintroduction of this legislation next session.

Upgrade Standards for Radiographic Technologists:

HB 5116, sponsored by Rep. Rodney Wakeman (R-Saginaw) establishes education and training standards for those who operate sophisticated imaging equipment. Currently, Michigan is an outlier among states, mandating requirements for only mammography and CT operation. MRS is supportive but has suggestions as to how to make the bill stronger. For a variety of reasons, this legislation will die at the end of this session and will have to be reintroduced next year.

REGULATORY

The Certificate of Need (CON) Informal Workgroup on Computer Tomography is next scheduled to meet on October 27. If you need more information regarding this meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me.

OTHER

The Governor's office has been requested to draft a tribute proclaiming November 8, 2022 as the "Day of Radiology" in Michigan. I will keep you informed of the progress on this matter.



2022 Biennial Breast Imaging Virtual Conference

November 5 & 6, 2022

Please join us on November 5 & 6, 2022 for a free comprehensive and in-depth virtual breast imaging course. Free for MRS members. Our nationally renowned faculty include Christopher Comstock, MD, Memorial Sloan Kettering; Jay A. Baker, MD, FACR, FSBI, Duke University; and Catherine Giess, MD, Brigham and Women's, as well as other breast imaging experts. Our speakers will address topics targeted for radiologists in private practice or academic settings, as well as technologists, nurses, residents & fellows.

*15 Category AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™] will be available for physicians and nurses, and 15 Continuing Education credits through the ASRT for radiologic technologists upon approval.



Christopher Comstock, MD
Clinical Member
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center
New York, New York



Jay Baker, MD, FACR, FSBI
Professor,
Department of Radiology Chief,
Division of Breast Imaging Vice
Chair,
Clinical Operations
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina



Catherine Giess, MD,
Deputy Chair,
Department of
Radiology
Brigham and Women's
Hospital
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To post an open position contact Shannon Sage at shannon@michigan-rad.org

