

Our Mission

The SDMS PAC was established to preserve and promote good government, fiscal responsibility in government and the private business enterprise system, in particular with respect to Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

To achieve our mission, the SDMS PAC is organized and exclusively operated for the purpose of soliciting and accepting voluntary personal political contributions from individual SDMS members and employees, accepting unsolicited contributions from permissible sources, and making contributions and expenditures to support or oppose the candidacy, nomination and election of candidates for federal office and for such other political purposes as authorized by law.

Advocacy Agents: SDMS Members Make a Difference

Profiles of SDMS Members who have become engaged in advocacy work on behalf of the SDMS and the profession

This edition of the SDMS PAC *Sentinel* features Joy Guthrie, DHSc, RDMS, RDCS, RVT, RCS, RVS, ROUB, Lead Sonographer at Children's Hospital Central California, and Program Director for the Merced College Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program.

"The reason I originally joined the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography and volunteered to serve on the Government Relations' Committee was due to a sonogram misdiagnosis I saw performed by a non-certified sonographer," says Joy Guthrie of her motivation to become involved in advocacy work.

"I had a patient come in whose fetal echocardiography examination revealed an Ebstein anomaly, the worst I'd ever seen. An Ebstein anomaly is a congenital malformation of the heart; and while it is not as serious in adults, fetuses generally have severe disease and an unfavorable prognosis. Heart failure is not uncommon.

This mother had a 3D ultrasound at a business in the local mall a few days earlier. They advised, 'The baby looks great.'

When the findings from the sonogram were shared, the mother was distraught and argued that the examination was incorrect. It took a physician, a genetic counselor, and me considerable time to convince the mother of the findings and to defend our medical practice.

I knew from this one experience that I needed to be involved in the sonography profession's public policies and advocacy. It has always been impressed upon me, by both my family and my mentors, that it is possible for one person to make a difference. However, I was not certain that alone any one person could affect national policy; yet working with others, it seemed it might be possible.



Joy Guthrie, DHSc,
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To affect change, I operate from my educator instincts. Only when you have a strong knowledge base, ask the appropriate questions, and have the 'courage of your convictions' is it possible for change. I spent a great deal of time getting to know the SDMS and learned how its advocacy efforts influenced state and federal governments. I met with SDMS' leadership and found that the SDMS had a history of dealing with tough issues. The SDMS had advanced public policy positions that the sonography profession needed to ensure our future and our careers.

The position statement that I feel most strongly about is the professional performance standard for quality of care, "The Diagnostic Ultrasound (Sonography) Professional obtains and maintains appropriate professional credentials."

I work with 17 sonographers. Every one of them is certified. Certification is not debated; it is simply accepted that it a requirement. The students recognize that they are the future of our profession. These students are very bright; they are not afraid of new technologies. They are already engaged in the political process and often write letters to legislators advocating for our profession and attesting to our quality care commitment.



I know that our profession's future is in good hands. I am pleased to be a part of making that happen. One person can make a difference. I hope that you might become that next person who gets involved."



Featured FAQs

What is the difference between lobbying and advocacy activities?

Lobbying activities include meeting with a member of Congress or Senator or their staff to ask them to support or oppose a bill. A call, fax, email, or face-to-face meeting constitutes a lobbying contact.

Advocacy activities include monitoring progress of legislation, coalition building, and providing information regarding the SDMS to assist Congress in developing a position on legislation if information is requested by a legislator.

As a member volunteer, I have made calls to my legislators asking them to support the CARE bill. Does this mean I need to register as a lobbyist?

Typically, unless a person engaged in lobbying activities spends more than 20% of their time engaged in making lobbying contacts and lobbying activities on behalf of the Society, they do not have to register as federal lobbyists.

For answers to more frequently asked questions, please visit the frequently asked questions page on the SDMS PAC website: <http://www.sdmspac.org/FAQ.htm>



Topics of Interest
for Sonography
Professionals

National and State News Updates

Finance, HELP Leaders Meet On Health Agenda

From Congress Daily PM

Leaders of the Finance and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committees held their first meeting today on how they will move forward with legislation to overhaul the healthcare system. Senate Finance Chairman **Max Baucus** said their path forward will involve close consultation with President-elect Obama's team, but that legislation will originate from the committees. HELP ranking member **Michael Enzi** said he expects a healthcare overhaul to move early next year and could be one of the first bills out of the gate. Enzi also said senators used today to direct staff to get to work on several issues so senators can be ready to go next year, but he declined to specify senators' directions to staff.

http://www.nationaljournal.com/congressdaily/print_friendly.php?PAGE=PM&DATE=2008-11-19

Daschle To Run HHS

From Congress Daily PM

Former Senate Majority Leader **Tom Daschle** is President-elect Obama's choice to be HHS secretary, a source close to Daschle said today. Daschle, an early backer of Obama's candidacy, has long been interested in health care and was one of the staunchest backers of President Bill Clinton's failed 1993 push for universal care. "I've got some ideas that I think could be of help on this issue," Daschle told *Congress Daily* in June, after sources familiar with his thinking suggested he would be interested in HHS if Obama won the election. In his book, "Critical: What We Can Do About The Health-Care Crisis," published in February, Daschle proposed a Federal Health Board to "create a public framework for a largely private health-care delivery system."

http://www.nationaljournal.com/congressdaily/print_friendly.php?PAGE=PM&DATE=2008-11-19

Health Insurers Group Backs Universal Coverage with Mandate

From Congress Daily PM

Health insurers lined up today behind a proposal to guarantee coverage of pre-existing conditions as long as Congress arms them with a mandate for everyone to purchase insurance. Both proposals are part of Senate Finance Chairman **Max Baucus'** plan to overhaul the healthcare system and provide universal coverage. "No one should fall through the cracks of our healthcare system," Karen Ignagni, president and CEO of America's Health Insurance Plans, said. "Universal coverage is within reach and can be achieved by building on the current system." AHIP unveiled its backing of coverage mandates after the trade group took a recent tour of the country and queried stakeholders. According to a statement from AHIP, concern about pre-existing conditions came up frequently.

http://www.nationaljournal.com/congressdaily/print_friendly.php?PAGE=PM&DATE=2008-11-19

Baucus, Grassley Wade Into Quality of Service Debate

From Congress Daily AM

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008

by Anna Edney

Senate Finance Committee leaders stirred up public debate on linking Medicare inpatient hospital payments to quality of service.

Senate Finance Chairman **Max Baucus** and ranking member **Charles Grassley** revealed a discussion draft that would financially reward and punish hospitals based on their performance, a program dubbed value-based purchasing.

The idea is likely to be folded into larger healthcare legislation, such as universal healthcare or a Medicare physician payment fix. Baucus included a value-based purchasing proposal in a healthcare overhaul white paper he released last week.

The discussion draft would base increases or decreases in Medicare inpatient hospital payments on quality standards established by stakeholder groups such as the standard-setting organization National Quality Forum. Quality standards would include process measures like whether heart attack victims receive aspirin.

http://www.nationaljournal.com/congressdaily/print_friendly.php?PAGE=AM&DATE=2008-11-20

Tapped for HHS, Daschle Brings Hill Connections to Health Care Overhaul

CQ TODAY PRINT EDITION – HEALTH

Nov. 19, 2008 – 8:21 p.m.

By Alex Wayne, CQ Staff

Senate Democrats say that President-elect Barack Obama's choice of former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle to head the Department of Health and Human Services would greatly help with efforts to overhaul the health care system next year.

A Democratic congressional aide confirmed that Daschle would be nominated to head the department. The aide requested anonymity because the nomination has not been publicly announced by Obama or his office.

Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., said Daschle did not deny he would be nominated in a phone conversation Wednesday afternoon. "I congratulated him, and he didn't say, 'Hey, wait a minute,'" Conrad said.

Many Democrats and health-related interest groups expressed enthusiasm for the appointment.

<http://www.cq.com/document/display.do?dockey=cqonline/prod/data/docs/html/news/110/news110-000002988410.html@allnews&metapub=CQ-NEWS&binderName=cq-today-binder&seqNum=10>

Key Senators Meet to Coordinate Plans for Overhauling Health Care

CQ TODAY PRINT EDITION – HEALTH

Nov. 19, 2008 – 4:54 p.m.

By Drew Armstrong, CQ Staff

Key Senate health care players from both sides of the aisle met for the first time Wednesday to discuss their plans for a health care overhaul bill next year.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.; Christopher J. Dodd, D-Conn., the second-ranking Democrat

on HELP; and Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., gathered with their ranking Republican colleagues and other key committee members. After the meeting, they expressed optimism about taking significant action in 2009.

“We all agreed that there has not been a better time in modern American health care to get meaningful health care reform,” Baucus said after the meeting.

The meeting was held in Kennedy’s new office, just off the Senate floor. Kennedy did not emerge to speak with reporters. He returned to the Senate this week after being largely absent since he was diagnosed in May with brain cancer.

<http://www.cq.com/document/display.do?dockkey=/cqonline/prod/data/docs/html/news/110/news110-000002988351.html@allnews&metapub=CQ-NEWS&binderName=cq-today-binder&seqNum=16>

Insurers Make Pitch for Health Coverage Mandate

From Washingtonpost.com

By Kevin Freking

The Associated Press

Wednesday, November 19, 2008; 3:30 PM

WASHINGTON -- The health insurance industry said Wednesday it will support a national health care overhaul that requires them to accept all customers, regardless of pre-existing medical conditions, – but in return, it wants lawmakers to mandate that everyone buy coverage.

Lawmakers have signaled their intent to craft health care legislation early next year, and the insurance industry’s support would make passage easier. That legislation is expected to closely track the proposals of President-elect Barack Obama. However, Obama separated himself from his Democratic challengers by opposing an individual mandate for adults to buy health insurance.

More lawmakers may agree to a mandate if it means the insurance industry will back those efforts. They’ll remember it was the industry’s opposition 15 years ago that helped scuttle former President Clinton’s health plan.

The board of directors for America’s Health Insurance Plans agreed to the trade-off Monday night. The board endorsed the proposal after a series of hearings in various states.

“We hope this will be a contribution to help members of Congress fashion their proposal,” said Karen Ignagni, president and chief executive officer of the trade group. “We’re going to provide all the technical background that we have assembled, all the experience we’ve assembled at the state level, and we’re going to work very hard with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. We want to make sure that whatever reforms are advanced, no one falls through the cracks.”

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/19/AR2008111901642_pf.html



The U.S. Department of Labor reported in the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-2009 Edition, that employment of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers is "expected to increase by 19% through 2016." They say sonography is becoming an "increasingly attractive alternative to radiologic procedures" and that "sonographic technology is expected to evolve rapidly."

SDMS: Commitment to Certification

Most SDMS members are certified, however certification is not currently mandatory. SDMS has made it a priority, in its Strategic Plan, to ensure that this is changed (<http://www.sdms.org/members/plan.asp>). Without national certification standards, there are growing concerns that non-certified sonographers may be producing flawed images, which could lead to misdiagnosis and repeat studies.

In addition, there is a growing trend toward accrediting the laboratory or facility in which the examinations take place rather than requiring certification for the sonographers. While SDMS supports accreditation, it does not ensure the person with 'the hand on the transducer' is certified.

The SDMS has made an organizational commitment to the pursuit and establishment of national certification standards for the profession. It is the 'right thing to do' for patients, for our profession, and for the practicing sonographer.

The Society's Washington, D.C. based advocacy activities are managed by the noted K&L Gates law firm. Additionally, the association supports a strong Government Relations Committee (GRC) whose membership is comprised of sonographers who have developed specific expertise and experience in the areas of sonography practice and legislative matters.

There are three pieces to the SDMS advocacy efforts to achieve national certification standards - our professional lobbying team, the GRC, and you.

The SDMS is often asked by members how to get involved in the legislative or regulatory process. It is simple, and anyone can be a part of the process.

1. The SDMS periodically issues legislative or regulatory "Calls to Action"; where members are asked to call or write their Congressperson or state legislator. This is your most important advocacy role. Legislators listen to their constituents. You are the person they want to hear from.
2. Stay informed on the issues. A knowledgeable SDMS member is an important part of the SDMS political effort. To stay informed and make educated decisions about the profession, check the SDMS website on a routine basis. There are a number of publications with the most current information on what is happening that will affect you, your career, and your profession. These newsletters include the *SDMS Sound News*, *SDMS News Wave*, and of course, the *SDMS PAC Sentinel*.
3. The SDMS announced the formation of its new SDMS Political Action Committee (PAC) earlier this year. The SDMS PAC was established to assist SDMS' efforts to promote issues related to Diagnostic Medical Sonography at the federal level. To learn about the SDMS PAC and how it works, go online to www.sdmspac.org.

As Charlotte Henningsen, MS, RT(R), RDMS, RVT, FSDMS, and President of the SDMS PAC, said, "We want elected officials to understand those legislative matters that are important to patients, the profession, and to you ... the sonographer."

SDMS PAC Board of Directors



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The SDMS PAC Website



If you want the most up-to-date information about legislative and regulatory news that affects the sonography profession, then visit the website of the SDMS Political Action Committee (SDMS PAC) at www.sdmspac.org. The SDMS PAC website is continually 'refreshed' with the latest in political news, updates regarding developments that affect sonographers, and includes a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) about the SDMS PAC, and its work on behalf of SDMS members.

So if you haven't visited the SDMS PAC website yet then what are you waiting for? Go to www.sdmspac.org and see what you've been missing.

"The ultimate measure of a person is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

– Martin Luther King Jr.
