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NEWS RELEASE



SDMS Forges Alliance with OSHA to Reduce and Prevent Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders

PLANO, TEXAS – On October 26, 2004, the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS) and the occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) signed a formal Alliance in Washington D.C. in an effort to reduce and prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSD).

The SDMS is pleased to be working with OSHA and its other alliance partners to increase awareness of WRMSDs, develop training programs, and provide educational resources to reduce the high incidence rate of WRMSDs in the sonography profession. The SDMS is confident that the collaboration with OSHA and its other alliance partners will multiply the society's efforts, effectively improving the work environment for its members and the ultrasound community.

In a joint statement, Joan P. Baker, Chair, SDMS WRMSD Conference and Donald F. Haydon, SDMS Executive Director said: "SDMS is proud to have formed an Alliance with OSHA to address the issue of work-related musculoskeletal disorders in the sonographer population. We believe that our organizational cooperation holds real promise for reducing the injury incidence rate among sonographers and enhancing the lives of those who dedicate their careers to providing access to quality diagnostic medical ultrasound for the American public." OSHA Administrator John Henshaw agrees, stating "It's important that we work together and focus our resources where they will have the

greatest impact on worker safety. I'm confident that by working together toward a common goal, we can improve the health and safety for sonographers."

It is through the efforts of Joan Baker, a champion in the cause of preventing WRMSDs since 1995, that this SDMS/OSHA alliance came to fruition. Ms. Baker served as the Chair and facilitator of the 2003 International Consensus Conference on Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders, which was hosted by the SDMS. The work product of the Consensus Conference was the *Industry Standards for the Prevention of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Injuries in Sonography*, a document which has been widely disseminated within the healthcare community. It was also at this consensus conference that Ms. Baker first learned of the potential for establishing a collaborative working relationship with OSHA and the first steps to forming the alliance were taken shortly after the conference was completed. The SDMS believes that the Industry Standards document will be a valuable resource that OSHA can now provide to employers, employees, and organizations interested in addressing the issue of sonographer work-related injuries.

For SDMS members and the sonography community, this alliance will create a better working environment for sonographers by addressing the multifaceted problem of WRMSDs from multiple angles. Prevention will be addressed through education and training for new sonographers, and currently practicing sonographers who have not yet been affected by WRMSDs. Prevention issues addressing ergonomic design will be addressed through the equipment manufacturers. Ms. Baker explains, "There's no point in just teaching prevention if it can't be incorporated into the workplace." In addition, the equipment manufacturers market internationally, so ergonomic design improvements will have a global effect.

As for addressing the needs of those sonographers who are already affected by WRMSDs, OSHA will have a collaborative presence with the SDMS at the Society's Annual Conferences, so sonographers can learn first hand what issues they face, and what information and resources are available to assist them. OSHA has a great deal of experience in the management of work-related injury, and will provide an expanded set of resources to sonographers who are scanning in pain. More information on what specific forms the SDMS/OSHA cooperation at the SDMS Annual Conferences will take, will be provided to SDMS members at a later date.

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