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October 29, 2004

Dale Cyr, Executive Director  
ARDMS  
51 Monroe Street  
Plaza East One  
Rockville, Maryland 20850-2400

Re: Prerequisite 2 Review

Dear Mr. Cyr:

In response to the call for comments on the ARDMS Staff report to the ARDMS Certification Committee regarding the proposed revision to ARDMS Prerequisite #2, the SDMS Board of Directors asks for consideration of the following comments.

The SDMS recognizes the diligent evaluation effort of the comments received from the ultrasound community. We appreciate the analysis performed by the ARDMS staff and acknowledge their thoughtful analysis and recommendation. The SDMS affirms the recommendation pending additional guidelines suggested in the comments that follow.

The SDMS agrees with the recommendation that under Prerequisite 2 an accrediting agency must specifically provide programmatic accreditation for diagnostic medical sonography programs (including cardiac and vascular sonography programs) and should be recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). The SDMS notes that a key to maintaining the integrity of this prerequisite is a clear understanding of programmatic accreditation and that all programmatic standards are not equal.

The SDMS would urge that additional description of the components of programmatic accreditation be listed within Prerequisite 2. The required components should include the integration of clinical and didactic education. It is imperative that diagnostic medical sonography programs provide a fusion of classroom teaching and clinical instruction, so that students can actively blend critical thinking skills with scanning skills.

Programmatic accreditation should also include a review process of the educational standards by a community of organizations with expertise in sonography. These minimum standards should be reviewed, recognized, and approved by sonographer and physician representatives from organizations such as ASE, SDMS, ACR, AIUM, SVU, and SVS. In addition to this approval process by the sonography community, programmatic

accreditation should include the verification of compliance with educational standards through a comprehensive, peer review evaluation process to insure accountability.

The SDMS supports an independent Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) recognized by CHEA or USDOE. We urge the ARDMS to accommodate students during the transition that may be in the process of applying to accredited programs, or completing their sonography education in programs recognized by JRC-DMS. It is essential that the ARDMS allow these students to challenge the ARDMS credentialing examinations at the time of graduation. These graduates will be completing the same educational requirements that have been recognized by the ARDMS under the CAAHEP accreditation umbrella and anticipate ARDMS eligibility upon graduation.

In summary, the SDMS essentially concurs with the staff recommendation of the proposed revision to Prerequisite 2, however, we urge the ARDMS to clarify the definition of programmatic accreditation by including integration of clinical and didactic education, acceptance by the ultrasound professional organizations, and a peer review process to insure accountability. Additionally, the SDMS supports an independent JRC-DMS and urges the ARDMS to accommodate students in the process of obtaining sonography education from JRC-DMS programs during the anticipated transition period.

The SDMS petitions the ARDMS to earnestly consider this response with respect to the future integrity of accredited sonography education. We request the opportunity to send a representative, Charlotte Henningsen, SDMS Board Liaison to Sonography Registries, to attend the public session and present an oral report to the ARDMS Certification Committee on December 9, 2004.

Sincerely,

Laurinda Andrist, BS, RDMS, RDCS,  
President

Charlotte Henningsen, MS, RDMS, RVT, RT,  
Board Liaison to Sonography Registries

Cc:  
Donald F. Haydon, CAE  
Executive Director