2020 ELECTION VOTER’S GUIDE

Candidate Statements
Cast your vote and let your voice be heard.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

Like many people in the healthcare field, I have a deep desire to help others and to give back to the profession I love. The experiences that I have gained as a staff member, a department manager and an educator, uniquely qualify me as a candidate for this position. Strategic planning, budgeting, contract negotiations, onboarding education and faculty, staff and student evaluations are all issues I have been responsible for. I have worked collaboratively with others in maintaining federal, state, local governmental and professional society requirements and grant writing. My passion for teaching, my desire to share my experiences, what my experiences have taught me and my love of the profession is what I offer to bring to the board of directors, if I should be so honored with your votes.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

As someone currently working in a COVID 19 hospital, I have come to believe the sonography profession and health care in general is at a transformational juncture. Through my time, I have learned the importance of teamwork, patience and the essence of “other duties as assigned.” It is clear that sonographers will need to be adaptable and flexible for whatever the future holds. Education and training will be important as sonographers are assuming additional responsibilities. Communicating and working as a team in a multidisciplinary environment will be important for our members.

No one predicted or planned ahead for this pandemic. The critical challenge facing SDMS members and the profession is what lies next. Our focus should be assembling a team of sonographers, educators and administrators to develop solutions and recommendations to move the profession forward and provide help and assistance to our members as the industry transforms and evolves.
JILL GRISE, 
BS, RDMS, RVT

1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I am honored that the Nominating Committee has slated me to run for a position as Director for the Board of Directors. I have a passion for sonography and am so grateful for the opportunities I have had to serve in this wonderful profession. I am proud to care for the patients that I have served over the past 16 plus years of my career. I enjoy the opportunity to meet other sonographers and share and learn from them. I have served as a volunteer for the SDMS for the last few years as a member of the Membership Awards and Recognition Committee, as a manuscript reviewer for the JDMS, as a CME test writer for the JDMS, and as a CME Reviewer. I have enjoyed these opportunities so much and am grateful to the SDMS for allowing me to serve in these capacities. I feel that it is very important to help others and give support to those who are in need. Being a member of the Board of Directors would be a dream come true for me. I am a hard working and dedicated individual and would take my responsibilities seriously. I am always eager to take on new tasks and better myself as a sonography professional. I want to continue to support the SDMS in any way that I am able to and help others in the profession. I would be so very honored to serve as a Director on the Board of Directors.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

Currently the sonography community is facing very uncertain times with the COVID-19 pandemic. We are at the frontlines trying to care for our patients in a safe manner, with lack of proper protections. We continue to provide essential services so that our patients can continue to receive necessary exams. We have revamped our practices to ensure the safety of our patients. We will continue to adapt our practices to reflect the current practices.

Ergonomics is another critical challenge that sonographers face every day. Educating people on safe ergonomic practices is vital. We are faced with difficulties in our day to day practices scanning obese patients, performing portable ultrasound exams, and performing lengthy ultrasound exams. These situations place us in jeopardy of serious musculoskeletal disorders. Educating the employer in best practices is important in the process of protecting sonographers from injury. The SDMS has worked very hard in this battle and will continue to do so.

Education and credentialing is another critical challenge sonographers face. I have worked with non credentialed sonographers in the past and feel adamant that this should not be an acceptable practice. Our patients deserve so much better than that. Sonography is so vital to healthcare and therefore only credentialed sonographers should be performing exams. Unqualified sonographers put the patients at risk.

Another critical challenge that sonographers face in this era is quality of exams versus quantity of exams. Now more than ever healthcare is becoming money driven. The more exams performed each day allows the facility to make more profits. Unfortunately the quality of the exam is put in jeopardy by forcing sonographers to rush through an exam to get to the next case. The patients in our care deserve a quality exam performed correctly. Cutting corners in healthcare must never be allowed to be an acceptable practice. Ultrasound exams should be scheduled with proper time allotted to properly perform the exam. This is vital for the well being of the patients we service.

The SDMS has served as an organization to promote the well being of its members and will continue to do so for many years to come. I am so proud to be a member of this wonderful organization. I look forward to serving in whatever capacity I am needed.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I believe my biggest strength is my passion for Diagnostic Medical Sonography and the profession. I have over 30 years’ experience as a sonographer; and 15 year as a CAAHEP accredited sonography program director. I have been part of the SDMS for many years serving on multiple committees and Board positions, a presenter at SDMS conferences and a JRCDMS site visitor. I understand the committee structure and operations of organizations such as the SDMS. I will apply my passion for Sonography to promote our profession and improve conditions in the workplace to ensure that future sonographers are able to have a long and fruitful career. My belief in the power of hard work will be used in whatever capacity that I can be of service to the SDMS and our profession because our tomorrow depends on us today.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

A challenge for our sonography community is the decline in reimbursement and the push for more cost effective diagnostic imaging. This and other factors are putting the health of all sonographers at risk. Work-related musculoskeletal injuries are a common cause of pain among sonographers and needs to be recognized as a REAL issue it continues to be. The SDMS has and will continue to be the voice to address this issue so that our next generation of workers are not afraid to become sonographers because of the potential for injury.
1. Why are you the best candidate for this position?

I am a registered nurse and sonographer with a 12 year background in critical care nursing and 35 years of experience in OB/GYN ultrasound, the last 27 years in Maternal-Fetal Medicine. Combining my two passions has given me a broad perspective of patient care in the medical field. I will be retiring from clinical work soon and would like to utilize some anticipated free time to remain actively serving the ultrasound community.

As the Ultrasound Education Coordinator for UnityPoint Health-Meriter and University of Wisconsin affiliated center, I have had the opportunity to share my passion for ultrasound by training new sonography and medical staff from MRM, OB/GYN, and radiology along with students from many different backgrounds. I have collaborated in research, publications, and many public speaking events. I have enjoyed working on projects with the SDMS in the past and would love to continue advocating for the profession of sonography by serving on the Board of Directors.

2. What are the most critical challenges affecting SDMS members in the sonography community?

Balance! Finding the balances between your personal life and professional life, patient expectations and medical limitations, communicating findings versus diagnosing findings, perseverance to obtain images and time allotments for exams, maintaining your professional expertise, and taking care of others while taking care of yourself.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I am task oriented and methodical in my methods of planning and executing a plan. I enjoy collaboration and have the ability to see the big picture while appreciating the input of those around me. Non-conventional approaches do not intimidate me, although I am able to respect the traditional way of doing something as well. I am passionate about sonography and this community and truly believe that I can use my experiences and knowledge to progress this field while gaining knowledge through the experiences of those around me.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

Challenges faced by the SDMS include the ongoing struggle to establish standards and expectations in regards to consistency within the field of sonography, whether in reference to education, registration status, scope of practice, etc. The SDMS strives to lead by example by demonstrating the standards we should have for ourselves as medical professionals who operate more independently in comparison to other allied health professionals. Continued efforts to standardize the requirements in these labs, supported by legal legislature, will assure that our profession is held to the highest standard to provide the best quality of care.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I am interested in serving in an SDMS elected position because I want to be a voice for the sonography profession. I have been a member of the SDMS Government Relations Committee, Education Committee, and the CME Review Committee. I deeply value the experience and knowledge obtained while taking part in committee activities, especially the Government Relations Committee where I collaborated with other committee members to meet with legislators in Washington, D.C. to discuss federal certification requirements. I wish to continue my involvement with the SDMS and further advancing the strategic goals of the society. I am a full-time clinical associate professor and program chair for a baccalaureate-degree sonography program accredited in general, vascular and cardiac concentrations by CAAHEP. I have had extensive experience with curriculum development and design, sonography educational standards, and programmatic accreditation. I have over 25 years of experience in diagnostic medical sonography and I am credentialed by the ARDMS in Abdomen, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Breast, and Vascular specialties. I have a wide range of clinical experience after being employed in hospital departments as well as outpatient specialty offices where I currently practice as a per diem vascular sonographer.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

As an educator and program director of a sonography program, I foresee the willingness of clinical facilities to participate in quality sonography clinical education as a challenge. Many factors have placed a heavy burden on sonography departments requiring them to do more with less in order to increase productivity levels. Clinical staff sonographers have limited time and resources to provide quality education to students. I fear this will become more prevalent and will result in difficulty ensuring quality clinical placement of sonography students in formal programs. The SDMS should continue to encourage practicing sonographers and clinical affiliates to participate in the clinical education of sonography students. These clinical partnerships are essential in order to provide the proper training and hands-on practice necessary for future sonographers. The expanded use of ultrasound in health care by non-sonographers will continue to be a challenge in the sonography field. Easier access to ultrasound equipment and mobility of hand-held ultrasound technology will allow ultrasound to be accessed everywhere by everyone. The SDMS should continue to provide recommendations on the performance of point-of-care ultrasound in relation to the health care provider's scope of practice.

Other critical issues facing the SDMS are the decline in insurance reimbursement for imaging services as well as the creation and implementation of federal minimum education requirements and certification standards for those professionals performing diagnostic sonographic exams. The SDMS should continue to oppose reimbursement cuts and should advocate for Congressional implementation and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) implementation of quality mandates. These quality mandates should include sonographer certification in the exam specialty and/or laboratory accreditation for general, vascular and cardiac specialties. In the absence of federal regulation requiring sonographer credentialing, the SDMS should remain a voice for the sonography profession as individual states enact their own licensing requirements.
VALERIE ECHEVERRIA, MS, RT(R)(M), RDMS, RVT

1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

A simple answer would be “I have a lot of experience and a passion for our field,” but the truth is, all nominees have this in common. I believe I am the right fit for this position because I represent the target audience that the SDMS wants as a committee and board member. I share the concerns of my fellow colleagues and am devoted to the profession. I have worked in a variety of institutions and in multiple different modalities. Additionally, I recognize that it takes a lot of courage and motivation to subject yourself to the scrutiny of the review process as a nominee for an elected office. I attest that I will be honest, fair, and impartial serving as a committee member for the Nominating Committee.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

I believe our profession is facing many challenges in 2020 that are unlike anything we have encountered before. Circumstances such as lack of personal protective equipment, access to disinfection products, and potential furlough or layoff situations have been immediate concerns of many SDMS members. Although these are very real and tangible issues, I believe there are some critical challenges facing SDMS members that existed before COVID 19 and continue to plague our profession.

Recent studies confirm that a majority of sonographers continue to scan in pain. This is often a result of poor ergonomics, difficult work conditions, overbooked schedules, or a combination of all three. In conjunction with musculoskeletal work-related issues, the physical demands of our profession are often overlooked. Our patient population can be difficult to scan, adjust in their bed, or assist in transfers. We work steadfast and often multitask during shifts, yet are still frequently required to cover overnight call rotations. All the while, many view our profession as simply an occupation as opposed to a trained professional skill. I believe updating standards of practice to encourage state licensure and minimum criteria for entry-level sonographers are essential to prevent unqualified individuals from practicing. This will also hold our profession to a higher regard.
TESSA GRAY, BSRS, RDMS, RVT

1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I consider myself to be the best candidate for this position primarily because I am interested in contributing to the sonography community in any way that I can. The field of sonography plays a major role in my life as I am not only a sonographer but also an educator, as well as a JRCDMS/CAAHEP programmatic accreditation site visitor. As a candidate for this position and someone who has not been in the field of sonography for an extensive amount of time, yet has excelled during my years in the field, I feel that I can offer insight from a unique perspective. In addition to this, I possess great organizational and critical thinking skills, I consider myself to be a team player, I have excellent communication and problem solving skills, as well as empathy and compassion for others. I would be honored to be chosen to participate in a leadership role within SDMS.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

The most critical challenge that I have noticed affecting SDMS members in the sonography community involve work-related musculoskeletal disorders. In my undergraduate degree, I wrote a research paper addressing this issue and found that over 90% of sonographers are scanning in pain. Contributions to this issue are primarily the lack of education about the importance of proper ergonomics, an increase in the demand of sonographic examinations, as well as unavailable resources to provide ergonomically sound equipment for sonographers.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

As a member of the Nominating Committee, I would continuously work towards meeting the objectives for that committee. Those objectives that must be met would be the following:

- Help to finalize a list of candidates for elected offices each year to be presented to the SDMS memberships for review.
- Develop, adjust, and make recommendations regarding policies and procedures for the nomination and election process.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

The definition of an entry-level sonographer has changed drastically over the past few years. Presently, new graduates are faced with not only general entry-level skills that were obtained through their educational programs but are now expected to be proficient in other specialty areas. It is not uncommon for an employer to ask new graduates to be complement in general as well as vascular and or cardiac scanning. This places a heavy burden on the educational programs in that their curriculum and clinical rotations remain current and offer the proper objectives and competencies to meet the needs of employers.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I have been a Registered Sonographer for 36 years now. I have worked in almost every conceivable environment from hospitals, outpatient clinics, mobile service, academic settings and now in a training position for an global US manufacturer. It has been an amazing career to this point and I have no plans to slow down soon. Serving in an elected position for the SDMS will allow me to give back to the profession and society that gave so much to me. I feel I can bring an abundance of real world experience to the position to help grow the SDMS to even greater heights.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

I believe that one of the biggest challenges is attaining and keeping new members. Sonographers need to feel like the SDMS is inclusive to all members regardless of their affiliation. We currently have a very robust offering of benefits for SDMS members but I would love to explore new ideas on membership attainment and retention. Just as important is helping our membership navigate the rapidly changing healthcare environment, from licensing issues, reimbursement challenges and the rapid technical advancements in our US systems and procedures.
KATIE SANDER, RVT, RMSKS

1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I would feel honored to be a part of an organization as SDMS and to give back the knowledge that I have acquired throughout my 20 years in the sonography field. I have experience in multiple ultrasound modalities and have been given the opportunity to work in many different job environments. I started my career in a hospital setting where I gained most of my experience scanning general, vascular, and pediatric ultrasound at Sacred Heart Hospital. When I moved to Raleigh, NC, I was able to work at an outpatient center and advance my career into a supervisor role in which I managed a team of sonographers throughout 4 centers. I currently work as the lead sonographer at a research facility in Raleigh.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

The most critical challenges affecting the SDMS members in my community are shoulder/wrist work related injuries and shortened exam times. The radiologists have always relied on the sonographers expertise and preliminary reporting, but most radiologists who trust the sonographers on the team would like them to do more. The radiologists are expected to read more exams, putting additional strain on their time. Educating sonographers to help the radiologists more in reporting would allow the ultrasound community to keep exam times longer as well as helping to minimize work related injuries.
FELICIA TORENO,
PhD, RDMS, RDCS, RVT

1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I would be the candidate best suited for this position on the Nominating Committee because over the past thirty-five years I have been in, at one time or another, many of the roles sonographers fill. I understand the viewpoints of today's sonographer, no matter the role they currently fill and I want to be a part of the solution that makes their lives a little bit easier and more secure. I have had experience with leadership in several sonographic organizations and I feel honored to be considered in any role which allows me to give back to the profession of sonography.

A good candidate is someone who promises to work diligently to provide whatever support the SDMS can provide to all sonographers. We also need someone who will push the boundaries of our profession to be sure all sonographers are heard. We need advocates for students, staff sonographers, as well as those who are just entering our chosen field and I hope to bring a strong vision related to the future of our profession, as a whole, and the roles sonographers fill that can help guide us and offer pertinent input to decisions which will impact our future careers.

In the current economic and social environment, sonographers want well rounded representation from their national organization. I look forward to trying my hardest to meet some of those needs for my fellow sonographers, as I myself learn how to deal with the changes we are all facing.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

How can any current considerations to the challenges facing us, as sonographers start with anything other than COVID 19 and the implications that have impacted us all personally as well as professionally. Each of us wants to help patients and be a part of the diagnostic healing process, but that becomes difficult when we can’t foresee the pathway ahead of us. Between an unknown virus, lack of necessary work supplies, and no immediate signs of end to these new normals, all sonographers, no matter their work environment is facing new and unexpected challenges.

The SDMS can help guide all of us as we try to adjust. Some ways to make life easier for us are fairly easy to guess; easy to earn CME's and webinars, and well written statements regarding our needs to be published and distributed appropriately, such as the one we received by Ted Whitten, our president. The SDMS will also be the organization most of us look to for guidance as we continue to face new and ongoing challenges.

Ongoing challenges will impact sonographers differently. Hospital based sonographers will be carefully watching hospital census’ for both peaks as well as the valleys we will face as patients choose not to have many elective procedures. Educators are finding themselves with students who have no accessible clinical sites, and having to teach material in a manner, if not new, at least not standard for many of us. Many educators will look to the SDMS to help them get through this period of adjustment and forced innovation.
And through all of this upheaval, Point-of-Care Ultrasound remains a growing subset to those of who scan. The practitioners who are scanning include Physicians, PAs, RNs, Anatomists, and a variety of other health care providers. They need training, too, and the SDMS and sonographers, are well suited to help prepare educational guidelines. The SDMS has a good opportunity to become active with this group, which is only growing.

As if all of those things weren’t enough. The average sonographer still has to find a way to learn about and understand all current advances in sonography, clinically, as well as those based in Instrumentation. Those are needs that can be provided to SDMS members through knowledgeable and dynamic speakers via Webinars. But every challenge has a solution and, as always, the SDMS will help us navigate our way as Sonographers.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I am the best candidate for this position because I feel it is important to provide avenues of education for members to stay current in the field with new technologies and reinforce proper sonography practices. I am a motivated individual who thoroughly enjoys working in the sonography field and recognize this organization is crucial in furthering the education and skills of sonographers after they graduate from their programs. As a member of the finance committee I would strive to build a financially stable organization which can continue to provide interesting programs that will encourage members to participate in the many opportunities that the SDMS offers.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

Some of the most critical challenges affecting SDMS members are accessing reasonable and affordable continuing education, maintaining consistent standard of care across the field, practicing proper ergonomic care, and avoiding ‘burnout’.
1. WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

I have been a professional sonographer for over two decades and attended many professional meetings. I am a great candidate for this position but with all the outstanding men and women that I have met in this society...I would never plant my flag as the best.

We have all worked hard, far beyond our forty hour work weeks. I have made critical decisions, and good ones, with my eyes barely open at 3am with an ultrasound probe in my hand. I have attended meetings where I felt I was the only calm voice or the one willing to listen to the whole story.

We, as sonographers, possess the qualities of leadership and caring. We use our knowledge to serve each other and elevate our profession and at times each other. I look forward to being given the opportunity to contribute.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SDMS MEMBERS IN THE SONOGRAPHY COMMUNITY?

Had I been asked this question a couple months ago, I would have said overwork and underpaid. But now as our globe is consumed in a pandemic...I would say that sonographer safety has risen even higher. Our challenge now is to be heard and understood...our workflow necessitates that we remain close to exposed patients in small rooms with sketchy ventilation for extended periods of time. Our use of PPE has only added to our challenges faced already. I could barely see through multiple layers of goggles and foggy face shields.

I feel that now, more than ever, we need to come together and share the current best practices of workflow, research, and emerging clinical data to keep up with this current pandemic. Multiple centers are sharing daily their data like I’ve never seen before to assist patients. We can take this opportunity to really do the same. In three or four years...we will experience another virus and be even better prepared as an organization and sonographer family.
THE VIRTUAL VOTING BOOTH FOR THE 2020 SDMS ELECTIONS IS OPEN FROM MONDAY, JUNE 15 (12:00:01 AM CENTRAL) THROUGH FRIDAY, JULY 10 (11:59:59 PM CENTRAL). ALL INDIVIDUAL SDMS MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE.

TO CAST YOUR VOTE, SIMPLY GO TO:

vote.sdms.org