

Concerns
2001

Council of Affiliated Regional Radiation Oncology Societies

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WHO WE ARE

The Council of Affiliated Regional Radiation Oncology Societies (CARROS) was founded in 1978 to provide a mechanism for the exchange and dissemination of information on the clinical practice of radiation oncology at the state and regional levels. CARROS is involved in developing comprehensive radiation oncology programs and continuing medical education, and providing a framework for dialogue among the state and regional organizations representing other oncologic disciplines. CARROS also works to further the purposes of the American College of Radiology (ACR) and the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) at the state and regional levels.

TOP PRIORITIES IN 2001

- Expansion of membership to include new geographic regions currently not represented in the organization
- Following those legislative and regulatory issues outlined by the Joint ACR/ASTRO Government Relations Committee

Since its inception, CARROS has disseminated federal legislative and regulatory information in a timely manner through its network of radiation oncologists. CARROS remains committed to identifying and addressing emerging political and socioeconomic

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trends that may affect the clinical practice of radiation oncology.

Advancing state-of-the-art technology in radiation oncology during a time of cost constraint remains a challenge. Today's vast array of innovative technologies requires significant financial outlays and changes to the physical plant, and dramatically alters the day-to-day operations of a department. Deciding which technologies to incorporate remains difficult. Although compelling data may suggest a benefit for our patients, the efficacy and benefits of many emerging technologies have not yet been fully evaluated. CARROS is committed to fostering quality improvement and creating an ongoing evaluation process of new treatment modalities.

CARROS, through the ACR Radiation Oncology Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) Network, closely monitors Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) policies. HCFA requires state Medicare carriers to maintain Carrier Advisory Committees comprised of physician representatives from each medical specialty. Radiation oncologists are represented in each state by the radiation oncology representative and alternate selected to serve on the CAC. CAC representatives review and comment on drafts of local medical review policies prior to implementation. Through state radiation oncology CAC representatives, radiation oncologists have the opportunity to submit recommendations on medical policies while they are still in draft format and evaluate the policies that may affect socioeconomic and clinical practices. The ACR Radiation Oncology CAC Network, comprised of each radiation oncology state CAC representative and alter-

nate, works to advise and support radiation oncologists' interactions with Medicare at the local level.

CARROS is involved in legislative issues primarily through the joint ACR/ASTRO Government Relations Committee. In 2001, CARROS plans to follow several key issues, including:

- Plans to expand, intensify, and coordinate activities at the Institute for Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering at the National Institutes of Health
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensing requests to use the newly approved intravascular brachytherapy devices (the Cordis Checkmate™ System and the Novoste Beta-Cath™ System)
- Monitoring NRC training and experience requirements for authorized users
- Reviewing the medical record privacy rules issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in December 2000 to determine their impact on radiation oncologists.

Currently, CARROS has active regional societies representing 45 states; Washington, D.C.; Puerto Rico; and Canada. Thirty states and Puerto Rico have their own chapters, and 16 states are part of regional societies. CARROS is organizing a regional chapter that will include Nevada, Colorado, and Utah.

CARROS holds its annual meeting in conjunction with the ASTRO annual meeting, and a caucus for all radiation oncologists is held each year during the ACR annual meeting. Any radiation oncologist who is a member of the ACR can become a member of CARROS if his or her state has a CARROS-affiliated chapter. ■