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| **Reported by (Name):** | **David Jordan** |
| **Organization:**  | **Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC) MRI Division** |
| **Position Title:** | **Member, Board of Directors, representing AAPM** |
| **Activity:** | **Annual Board of Directors Meeting** |
| **Meeting Dates:** | **February 25, 2017** |
| **Meeting Location:** | **Hollywood, FL** |
| **Payment $:** | **N/A – paid by IAC** |
| **Reasons for Attending or not Attending** | **N/A** |
| **Issues from Previous Meetings or Year:** | **At last year’s meeting, the IAC received a letter from a medical physicist requesting that they review their Standards and consider implementing a requirement for annual medical physicist testing of MRI scanners similar to the other deemed-status programs.****The Board organized a subcommittee to study the issue for which I volunteered.****One conference call was held later in 2016 to discuss the question. The prevailing attitude among the physicians on the Board is that those familiar with the ACR accreditation program have not found the physicist evaluations helpful, and they feel that involving a physicist will just lead to them being forced to get their scanners (often low-field) to comply with the ACR phantom requirements. They further feel that their service contracts and PM activities maintain their systems in good-enough condition, in their judgment, and one physician tended to hijack the discussion complaining about how his physicist had gone on and on fighting with his vendor about the display monitor calibration (his site is accredited by both ACR and IAC).****Among the IAC program staff, it is common to refer to accredited facilities as “customers” or “clients” (which seems inappropriate) and there is a very strong focus on converting ACR facilities to IAC accreditation. They seem to believe that not having an annual physics evaluation requirement is an attractive “selling point” for IAC accreditation and seem to be very averse to acknowledging any arguments in favor of the value of this.****The IAC staff tried to convince the committee that the PM requirements in the Standards were sufficient to make physics review unnecessary. I challenged them to produce PM documentation submitted by facilities applying for accreditation or renewal. In five of the six cases they produced for the subcommittee, the vendor had not performed or not documented all of the items required by the IAC MRI Standards, but these applications had been recommended for approval by the staff and voted for approval by the voting subcommittees of the Board (which do not see the detailed documents submitted unless they ask; they just receive a summary and recommendation prepared by the staff). I succeeded in convincing the IAC staff that their current process for evaluating PM documentation lacked rigor, but the subcommittee concluded that the appropriate path was to tighten up the PM documentation review process rather than to proceed with implementing a medical physics annual survey requirement.** |
| **General Description of Activities of the Organization and/or Meeting:** | **The annual physics survey requirement discussion was reported to the full Board at a conference call in fall 2016 and was not on the agenda for this meeting.****This meeting consisted mostly of a review of statistics of number and type of accredited facilities and an overview of marketing efforts. IAC is actively seeking to recruit ACR-accredited facilities to convert to IAC accreditation using their offering of a single application/accreditation covering multiple facilities. The staff reported on progress with recruiting conversion of several large imaging center chains and hospital groups.****In addition, considerable time was spent discussing several minor revisions to the Standards that were proposed by staff. These were set aside for further review/discussion by working groups and the staff mentioned that the entire Standards for the MRI program are due for comprehensive review in 2018.** |
| **Issues for AAPM:** | **At present, the IAC does not have defined standards for the qualifications or duties of medical physicists in its MRI accreditation program, and efforts to define this have met with active resistance both from IAC staff and physician members of the Board. The perception is that physicist requirements are an unwelcome burden imposed by other programs and the IAC’s lack of such requirements is a ‘selling point’ for their accreditation over competitors.****The sole mention of medical physicists in the MRI Standards is the statement that acceptance testing on a new scanner must be performed by either the manufacturer’s representative or a medical physicist, but there is no detail to qualify the credentials of the medical physicist for such work, and I suspect that is because the Board expects that their “customers” will take advantage of installation reports provided by their vendors free of charge and that nobody will actually retain a real medical physicist to do this work.** |
| **Budget Request ($):** | **None (N/A)** |