



## **SOCIETY FOR RADIATION ONCOLOGY ADMINISTRATORS**

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February 3, 2010

Walt Bogdanich  
Health Reporter  
New York Times  
620 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10018

Dear Mr. Bogdanich,

The Society for Radiation Oncology Administrators (SROA), a professional society that represents radiation cancer treatment center administrators in the United States, is gravely concerned that the recent series on radiation therapy accidents in the *New York Times* by Walt Bogdanich is likely to discourage some patients from undergoing necessary medical care.

As noted in the articles, radiation is used in approximately 50 percent of cancer treatments, with almost 1 million patients a year undergoing 23 million therapy sessions. Radiation therapy is also a medically justified treatment based on extensive research into the treatment's risks and benefits. In turn, SROA's primary responsibility is to the patient by ensuring that everyone in a radiation oncology department provides the safest and highest quality care.

The accidents described in the *Times*' articles are inexcusable at any level of health care and devastate not only the patient and family, but have significant implications for others who need care. A commitment to avoid devastating consequences at all levels of health care is why a majority of radiation oncology centers in the United States meticulously follow the protocols and guidelines established by organizations and federal agencies that address physics, education, credentialing and quality assurance.

Even though 17 states do not require individuals to hold a license to deliver treatments, SROA is working with a 22-member alliance of professional organizations to establish nationwide certification standards for all medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals. In fact, legislation before the U.S. Congress, the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy (CARE) bill, would establish minimum educational and certification standards for those professionals.

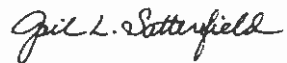
The SROA Advocacy Committee and its Board of Directors have responded to concerns that patients voiced in response to these articles by working with administrators across the country to provide guidelines for patients so that they know how to assess a radiation oncology center. Developing these guidelines is only one example of how our

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600 members work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure radiation safety so that patients receive the care they require and in the manner prescribed.

We understand the value of this series; however, we suggest that a balanced look is warranted given the total number of radiation treatments provided and patients served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail L. Satterfield".

Gail L. Satterfield  
President, SROA