

Progress in Professional Recognition and Title Protection

Background

An Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Recognition and Title Protection was formed by the Academy in 2003. The original committee included Ed Maher, Regis Greenwood, Kyle Kleinhans, and Kenny Fleming as the Acting Chair. The purpose of this Ad Hoc Committee was to determine the feasibility and methods that may be used to protect the CHP designation and how legislation may be utilized within future regulatory efforts as a means of considering CHPs to be competent persons to conduct specified work in a jurisdiction.

The scope of the professional recognition and title protection program was later expanded into a joint effort with the Health Physics Society, as described below, into a wider initiative to include health physicists and registered radiation protection technicians.

The Ad Hoc Committee transitioned at the Augusta 2004 Midyear Meeting of AAHP. During the Augusta Executive Committee Meeting it was decided to modify the objective of the Ad Hoc Committee to one of implementing some specific actions aimed at improving the Academy's posture relative to protecting the CHP title through legislative action at the State level. Howard Dickson was selected to chair the modified Ad Hoc Committee and the following members were appointed: Regis Greenwood, Ed Maher, Frazier Bronson, Tom Essig, and Judson Kenoyer. It was decided to pursue professional title protection via legislative means, i.e. a Profession Title Protection Act.

The purpose of a Profession Title Protection Act is to provide legal recognition to the profession of health physics, as well as provide assurance to the public that individuals representing themselves as being involved in the profession of health physics have met minimum qualifications, thereby protecting the public health and safety.

The Academy has been successful in negotiating a Tripartite Agreement with the Health Physics Society (HPS) and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) to mutually pursue professional recognition and title protection. The Tripartite Agreement outlines the duties and responsibilities of all parties and discusses financial arrangements. In essence the HPS and AAHP are buying services from AIHA and sharing that cost between us.

The next major hurdle was to prepare the language that would go into model legislation. Rather late in December 2004, the HPS and AAHP agreed on the "health physics" language for the model legislation. In addition the National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists (NRRPT) concurred with the model legislation language and their RRPT title was included. The AIHA accepted our recommended language with very slight modification.

Now we are engaged in the legislative process. Based on recommendation from Aaron Trippler, Director of Government Affairs for AIHA, we targeted Ohio and Georgia this year. AAHP President Tom Buhl and HPS President Ray Guilmette sent a joint letter to

the HPS Chapters in Ohio (3) and Georgia (2) informing them of the professional recognition/title protection initiative and requesting their support. We encountered nothing but enthusiasm and supportive folks in the Chapters.

Success in Georgia

Georgia House Bill 353, cited as the 'Industrial Hygiene, Health Physics, and Safety Profession Recognition and Title Protection Act' was signed into law May 9, 2005 and becomes effective July 1, 2005. This Act amends Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia relating to professions and businesses, so as to provide legal recognition to the professions of industrial hygiene, health physics, and safety.

The AAHP and HPS are particularly appreciative of the work of AIHA Executive Director Steven Davis in crafting the agreement and of Aaron Trippler, the individual primarily responsible for the success of this bill. AAHP's Howard Dickson and HPS's Ken Kase coordinated the health physics aspects of the bill. Once the bill was drafted, HPS Director and Atlanta Chapter President Robert (Bob) Whitcomb worked to notify and encourage the Atlanta Chapter to support this legislation.

An excerpt of the act is provided below:

Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to provide legal recognition to the professions of industrial hygiene, health physics, and safety, as well as provide assurance to the public that individuals representing themselves as being involved in the professions of industrial hygiene, health physics, and safety have met minimum qualifications, thereby protecting the public health and safety.

More specifically this law was enacted for the purposes of:

- 1) Prohibiting an individual from representing that the individual is a certified associate industrial hygienist, certified health physicist, certified industrial hygienist, certified safety professional, construction health and safety technician, occupational health and safety technologist, or registered radiation protection technologist unless the individual meets certain qualifications;*
- 2) Prohibiting a business entity from identifying, representing, or advertising itself as a provider of industrial hygiene, health physics, or safety services furnished by a certified associate industrial hygienist, certified health physicist, certified industrial hygienist, certified safety professional, construction health and safety technician, occupational health and safety technologist, or registered radiation protection technician unless the business entity meets certain qualifications; and*
- 3) Providing or recognizing certain qualifications for individuals and business entities using certain titles or making certain representations relating to the provision of industrial hygiene, health physics, or safety services.*

Penalties

Any person who violates this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00.

Future Activities

Legislation similar to that passed in Georgia is currently being pursued this year in the state of Ohio under the Tri-Partite Agreement. AAHP and HPS plans call for the introduction of similar legislation in approximately two new states each year in collaboration with AIHA.

The Ad Hoc Committee is expected to become a Standing Committee of the Academy with a dedicated mission to promote professional recognition and support title protection legislation.

References

http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2005_06/sum/hb353.htm

<http://hps.org/membersonly/newsandactivities/whatsnew.html#484>

AAHP Election Results

The American Academy of Health Physics is pleased to announce the results of the Academy election which closed on May 20, 2005. 494 ballots were cast. Edward F. Maher is our new President-Elect Designate, Robert P. Miltenberger will be the next Academy Secretary, and David S. Myers has been elected as an Academy Director.

The terms of office will begin at the Academy's Executive Committee meeting held in conjunction with the January 2006 Health Physics Society Midyear meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona and will run for (approximately) 3 years until the AAHP Executive Committee meeting held in conjunction with the 2009 HPS Midyear meeting.

Congratulations to these incoming additions to the Academy leadership, thanks to the Nominating Committee, to all the candidates, and to those CHPs who participated in the balloting process.

E-mail Address Correction

There was a typo in the CHP Professional Liability Insurance article in the June CHP News. The correct e-mail address for Brian M. Methe' is ***bmethe@stpetershealthcare.org***. The editor apologizes for this typo.