

Toward minimum practice standards in clinical medical physics:

Response to an increasing focus on reducing medical errors and validating professional competence.

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Abstract

Recent coverage in the mainstream media has brought significant attention to the uses of ionizing radiation in medicine. This is not a transient concern, however. The past two decades have seen an increasing focus on reducing medical errors and validating professional competence. Numerous national and international groups have studied the issue and provided recommendations that are largely consistent. Legislative and regulatory entities are responding with new requirements. The net result is a strong trend toward minimum practice standards for clinical medical physics. Our challenge as a profession is to be proactive and constructive in defining our profession and the minimum practice standards.

At the end of this presentation, participants will:

1. Understand the convergence of external factors that are driving the trend toward minimum practice standards;
2. Understand the current activities of the AAPM and closely related societies with regard to the aforementioned trend, with a particular focus on the recently initiated project to develop Medical Physics Practice Guidelines; and
3. Be aware of the combined effect of practice accreditation programs and payor policies in shaping the clinical medical physics practice environment of the near future.