Medicare Access to Radiologic Care Act (MARCA) Talking Points

I. Introductions (1 min.)
   a. Describe where you live, where you work, what you do. You may want to say a little something about RA law your state, the number of RAs there, etc.

II. Background on the RA profession (2 min.)
   a. Radiologist Assistants are highly trained physician extenders for radiologists. We complete advanced education and training that includes a rigorous academic program that involves a nationally-recognized curriculum and a radiologist-directed clinical preceptorship. In addition, RAs must pass a nationally-recognized certification examination.

   b. An RA can be certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists as a registered radiologist assistant or by the Certification Board for Radiology Practitioner Assistants as a radiology practitioner assistant.

   c. RAs are nationally-certified and are licensed or recognized in 29 states. More states are working on RA licensure laws.

   d. No other non-physician practitioner is trained to do what RAs can do, nor can they do it as safely as RAs can.

III. Describe the Issue (2 min.)
   a. Medicare currently requires radiologist extenders to perform aspects of diagnostic procedures under the personal supervision of a physician, which is the most restrictive supervision standard and often exceeds the supervision level established by states.

   b. The majority of states (as well as the American College of Radiology, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, the Society of Radiology Physician Extenders and the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists) have determined that RAs may safely and effectively perform these same procedures under “direct supervision,” where a physician does not need to be present in the room when the procedure is performed as long as he or she is physically present in the hospital or office suite.

   c. RAs should be permitted to perform procedures under the supervision requirements mandated by their respective states.
IV. Outline specific consequences (1 min.)
a. RAs are losing their jobs. If the radiologist has to be in the room with an RA while they work, he or she might as well perform the procedure. This does not help with patient backlogs or efficiency.

b. Hospitals can’t justify keeping RAs on staff if they are not permitted to do what they are trained to do.

c. Schools are suspending or terminating their RA programs.

V. Solution (1 or 2 min.)
a. We all know that there is a potential for access-to-care issues as more people gain health coverage. One solution is increased use of non-physician providers when appropriate. Our solution will help in the field of radiology and has the full support of everyone in the radiology community.

b. Congress must enact legislation that enables RAs to practice under the level of physician supervision required by their respective states. The current Medicare statute does not explicitly recognize RAs, and as a result, CMS cannot change the supervision requirements for RAs without relaxing the supervision standard for all physician extenders. Modifying the supervision standard for all physician extenders is not appropriate due to differences in training and experience.

c. Medicare patients face many problems finding physicians willing to take Medicare. This causes delays in diagnosis and treatment. The problem is worse in rural areas. RAs have a role in reducing or eliminating delays, improving access to care, and ensuring patient safety. In addition, RAs can help radiologists and provider organizations meet quality measures under the current Medicare fee-for-service program as well as under the new healthcare delivery models.

d. There is no opposition to this bill.

VI. The Ask (1 min. or less)
a. For House: Will you support our amendment by working to include it in any year-end Medicare legislative package, the physician payment, or any reasonable vehicle this year?

b. For Senate: Will you support our amendment and work to include it in any year-end Medicare legislative package, the physician payment, or any reasonable vehicle this year? Also, will you sign the attached letter?