

ACR State Legislative Program and Chapter Government Relations

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Historically, the ACR has assisted state chapters in reacting to legislative or regulatory issues on an ad-hoc basis. For many years, this issue-by-issue reaction response proved satisfactory. More recently, however, the states have been the initiators of both legislative and regulatory action aimed at dramatically affecting the health care delivery system.

Challenges for radiology have increased greatly over the past few years, but so have opportunities for initiatives on radiology issues. For instance, radiologists, through proactive efforts, have obtained legislation prohibiting the practice of physician self-referral. Other state chapters have secured full licensure requirements for out-of-state physicians practicing telemedicine. Still other chapters have sought licensure for radiologic technologists or medical physicists.

These experiences have focused the need for radiologists to become involved in legislative and regulatory activity at the state level. State chapters have utilized various methods to monitor and actively engage their state legislators. Some state chapters have hired legislative counsel or have tracked the legislatures closely by use of a volunteer committee. While several states have extensive programs for dealing with state governmental issues, other chapters have little, if any, formal mechanism of involvement.

The ACR, through use of a computer data base, has provided the state chapters with updates of current state legislative activity. While this service has proven to be of value to some chapters, it cannot be used alone to effectively guide the state chapters in their government relations efforts. Because the data base can never be as complete and timely as on-the-spot information obtained in the individual state, states should not rely on it as their primary source of legislative information. The ACR will continue to seek reliable sources of information on state legislation to supplement the chapters' efforts.

The focal point for monitoring government relations activity at the state level should be the state chapter. Most legislators and regulators respond best to local input rather than input from a national organization. The ACR has many resources to assist the state chapters in their efforts, but the most effective state government relations program requires local resources and input. While ideas are proposed in this section that would require the expenditure of funds, the personal efforts of our members and their families

is critical. Indeed, our greatest resource continues to be the active participation of our members.

Chapters may be concerned about the costs of an active state government relations program. There is no guarantee that establishing a state government relations program will always lead to desired results. However, the hazard of not participating is clear. As the scrutiny on health expenditures rises, and the debate on health care reform continues, participation in the process will be critical.

The intent of your state chapter's government relations program should be to represent the interests of the profession before state policy makers to maximize influence on public policy decisions. It is important to remember that radiologists should become involved in issues of indirect interest as well, such as programs to enhance the public health. The College will assist state chapters in organizing their government relations programs to meet the chapter's resources most effectively. This section will provide you with some essentials to keep in mind as you assess your government relations program. Should you need further assistance, please contact the ACR at 1-800-ACR-LINE ext. 4975.

State Legislative Communications

Key to any successful legislative or regulatory campaign are on-going, accurate and up-to-date communications. The ACR provides an e-mail-based *State Legislative Network* at least once a month during the height of the state legislative sessions to keep our chapters informed of important legislative trends and bills of importance to the profession. These reports highlight which states are currently dealing with common legislative issues. For instance, the state legislative network may show that bills on physician self-referral have been introduced in the states of Iowa, Montana, New York, Virginia, New Jersey and Oregon. The chapter president in Iowa can call on other state contacts to discuss the strategy being used for self-referral legislation.

The ACR staff will continue to serve as a central facilitator for both assistance as well as identifying optimal contacts for insight on current issues. The ACR has seen this type of interaction succeed at the state legislative level. For instance, the state of Ohio faced the prospect of a hospital single-billing system used for the services of hospital-based physicians in the hospital setting. The issue was quite similar to a situation faced in Maryland one year before. The Ohio chapter contacted the Maryland chapter to discuss arguments and the approach that the Maryland chapter had taken with its legislature.

While each state government is different, and the ultimate path for success may depend on different strategies, the experience of other state chapters can prove invaluable. A state's experience can have the effect of setting precedents as well. Policy determinations can often be dictated by a neighboring state's policy, and state

legislatures may act so they are not seen as behind the times on important emerging issues.

The ACR will also seek to develop listings on state legislative issues and develop action packages when necessary to assist chapters with common issues.

The ACR will do its part to monitor and identify national trends affecting the practice of radiology. But our ultimate success will depend on you. It is critical that the ACR hear from its chapters to get updates on issues of importance to the profession. The ACR can only be as good as its links in the chapters. Please send your updates to Brad Short, ACR, 1891 Preston White Drive, Reston, VA 20191 or fax it to him at 703-262-9319. If you prefer, Brad can be reached via e-mail at brads@acr.org.

Federal Communications

The College staff will also utilize the State Key Contact Network to distribute information on federal matters that may need an immediate response. While most matters pertaining to the federal government are handled by the ACR's national headquarters office, each legislator is elected locally and thus the opinions of local leaders are critically important. The ACR holds an annual meeting in Washington each spring to bring our message to Capitol Hill. For more information on this issue, please contact Josh Cooper at 800-227-5463 ext. 4888. Updates on federal legislation will also assist the states in coordinating policy at the state level. Additional sources of information on federal matters are the ACR E-News, which is sent to all ACR members on a weekly basis, and the Government Relations section of the ACR Web site (www.acr.org).

A separate network involving Medicare advisory committee representatives will help respond in a timely and informed manner to changes in Medicare policy. This network, known as the Radiology Carrier Advisory Committee (CAC) Representatives, interacts through the ACR Economics and Health Care Policy Department. Any questions concerning the CAC network should be directed to the ACR Economics and Health Policy Department at 1-800-227-5463.

Roles Within a State Chapter

Government Relations Chair/Committee

In formulating a plan for a state government relations program, it may be easiest first to identify what functions can be done by volunteers. Each chapter should have some mechanism for addressing legislative or regulatory issues. Most states will find that this can be done by a volunteer legislative committee of chapter members. This committee will typically provide information to the chapter's board of directors or executive committee which will make the decisions on how to address the legislative

issues. The functions, objectives, meeting intervals and make-up of the committee are often determined in advance by the executive committee, chapter board or the chair of the committee. Usually these "charges" will be structured to provide instruction to the committee without being so rigid as to leave the committee unable to fulfill its responsibilities.

One of the first tasks of the board or executive committee will be to determine who will chair the committee, how long the term of the chair will be, and in what manner the chair will be replaced at the end of a term. An important determinant is whether the structure of the committee will ensure long-term stability or highlight greater and more varied representation. Chapters wishing to provide greater representation through more frequent member rotation should consider the legislative cycle of the state. Most legislative sessions tend to last for a two-year cycle, with some issues being carried over for both sessions.

The committee chair should: (1) have a dedicated interest in government relations; (2) have an understanding of basic legislative and regulatory processes; (3) be willing to serve for the full term of the assignment; and (4) be able to work and interact on an ongoing basis with state legislators, regulators and their staffs as well as with the members of the committee and the board or executive committee. Some states may opt to select someone who already has experience in government relations. While expertise is always of critical value, a strong involvement and interest in government relations may prove just as important. Ideally, a chair should have some understanding of the process as well as the commitment and dedication to work to obtain the chapter's goals.

Some states may look for this individual to hold the job for several years in an effort to provide the maximum degree of stability and consistency. Others may decide to rotate the chair to ensure that it is representative of the subspecialties within radiology (e.g., radiation oncology, interventional radiology, nuclear medicine, etc.), the different settings within radiology (e.g., freestanding, community hospital, teaching hospital, etc.) and the different geographic areas of the state (e.g., rural vs. metropolitan, north vs. south). These choices provide advantages and disadvantages. The chapter can best determine a proper mix that is acceptable to your membership. For instance, a state may wish to develop the committee representation to reflect the various subparts of the practice of radiology (e.g., by subspecialty, type and region); however, the chapter may wish to elect a chair who can serve for several years to assure the desired degree of consistency. In finding a replacement for the chair upon completion of a term, the chapter may wish to choose among those who have served on the committee to provide both stability and greater representation. Committee rotation should be determined by each chapter, but should be mindful of the need for consistency, continued representation, and new ideas.

The chair of the government relations committee should be guided by the chapter leadership in determining: (1) how decisions will be made on issues; (2) who will communicate with the lobbyist or legislative advocate; (3) who will communicate with the ACR staff and leadership; (4) who will represent the chapter before the government (e.g., testifying, meeting with representatives); and (5) who will organize and communicate to the membership. The decisions on these issues should come from the board or executive committee. They should be explicit enough to convey the lines of communication but not inhibit the ability of the committee to respond quickly on issues when necessary.

The government relations committee should meet on an on-going basis but probably no less than twice per year. It is extremely important for lines of communication in the committee to be open, particularly while the legislature is in session. The committee may wish to hold one meeting several months prior to the next legislative session to map out legislative priorities. This allows enough time to present ideas to the chapter's board or executive committee for consideration.

Government relations committees should develop their own networks to assure expeditious communication. This will enable the committee to promptly do its work. Some states may also choose to implement a "key contact" system to rally support for a position to be taken at the state capitol. The ACR can assist the states in developing such systems.

The government relations chair or a committee member should be given an opportunity to address the state chapter membership at state meetings to update them on government relations activity. In addition, the state chapter may want to consider developing a newsletter on state government relations activities. Some state chapters may opt to include a section on government relations activities in an existing newsletter. Either way, timely and accurate information is the best way to keep your membership involved and fully informed. This will assist any grassroots or legislative action you may want to take in the future.

Legislative Advocate (Lobbyist)

It may be difficult for the government relations committee to monitor legislative activity quickly or accurately enough to effect the issue's outcome. In addition, once the issue has been addressed by the chapter, the government relations committee may not have the needed expertise to guide the legislation through the political process. **To fulfill both the legislative functions of monitoring and lobbying, the ACR recommends that states consider hiring a lobbyist or lobbying firm.**

Lobbying firms vary in size and purpose. Many law firms located in the state capital will engage in lobbying activity. Some lobbyists will work in solo practices with a small

clientele while others work in large (with over 100 employees) firms and represent the interests of many varied clients.

The advantages of hiring a lobbyist or lobbying firm are many. For instance, lobbyists:

1. Are professionals in their field--they provide expertise in legislative strategy and technique to facilitate legislation through the process.
2. Can quickly respond to issues and can assist chapters in providing appropriate communication to key members.
3. Can identify where leverage needs to be applied and can point out pitfalls. They understand the political climate in the state.
4. Can monitor the legislative process in an efficient and accurate manner.
5. Understand how legislation is formulated and can analyze legislative language.
6. Allow your chapter to devote its time where it may best be used, in providing technical advice and direction in policy.

There are some disadvantages to having a lobbyist as well. First is the expense. While fees will vary depending on the service agreement, generally fees will be similar to those charged by law firms. It is nearly impossible to measure the benefit side of hiring a lobbyist. Not only is most legislation not quantifiable, there are other tasks that a good lobbyist may perform that may have benefits well into the future. For instance, a lobbyist who engages the chapter in the development of good relations with legislators may pay off well in the future as these relations continue to develop. While money is a critical determinant in the hiring of the lobbyist, it is critical to understand the full value of the benefit received.

Lobbyists are not doctors and thus may not immediately understand or appreciate the problems faced by physicians today. Thus, hiring a lobbyist does not end the role of the chapter. Some state chapters that currently have lobbyists can attest that they are much busier now than they were prior to having hired the lobbyist. Thus, hiring a lobbyist does not absolve the chapter and its leadership from the responsibility to be involved in the process. Chapters must educate their lobbyists on substantive professional issues that concern radiology.

Choosing a lobbyist for your chapter requires considerable effort. While no list is complete, here are a few things you should consider.

- 1.) **Know the lobbyist's clientele**--It is fundamentally important to know

the other clients of the lobbying firm. There have been physician organizations that hire lobbyists who have represented interests such as the hospital association, the tobacco growers, and the insurance industry. While some states have conflict-of-interest laws that prohibit such arrangements, some firms may not be fully forthcoming with their disclosure. Ask to see the clients not only represented by your lobbyist, but by the entire firm. It is important to remember that a chapter may have conflicts with other groups on certain issues. A lobbyist representing other physicians may not always be the best choice.

- 2.) **Find out who your lobbyist will be**--You may have selected your lobbyist on the basis of interviews or word of mouth or on the basis of that lobbyist's political acumen. Then you find out just a month into the contract that your lobbyist is working on another client's matters and your issue has been sent to an associate. While some firms will allow you to only "hire the firm," you have a right to know who your representative will be and should feel comfortable with that individual prior to signing the contract.
- 3.) **Conduct interviews**--Never hire a firm by word of mouth alone – check them out through an interview. You would never hire an employee without an interview. The same principle applies to hiring a lobbyist. Ask about background, communication style, and work in the health care area. Don't be caught unaware after the contract has been signed.
- 4.) **Ask for references**--If members of the chapter have close relationships with elected officials, check out the lobbyist with those politicians or critical staff persons. Let them know that you have a list of lobbyists that you are considering and that you value their opinion. Even if you do not select that lobbyist, it is likely that the official will appreciate you coming to them. Otherwise you risk selecting someone who may alienate the leader. Ask some of the lobbyists of proponents or opponents of a recently decided issue how the lobbyist's firm added or detracted from the issue's outcome. Ask the state medical association for its reaction to the individual or firm. Is this person someone they can work with?
- 5.) **Look at more than one lobbyist**--Ask for several recommendations (at least 3) for lobbyists from political or business leaders. Consider calling the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the President of the Senate for recommendations. Check all the options available, negotiate the price, then compare so that you retain the best lobbyist(s) within your price range.

Legislative Counsel vs. Legal Counsel

Some chapters may use their legal counsel as their legislative counsel. A chapter can retain a law firm to serve as both legislative counsel and legal counsel. However, these roles should be distinguished. Legislative counsel represents the chapter in dealing with legislative and regulatory issues affecting radiologists. Most of the legislative counsel's duties involve advocacy for radiologists on public policy issues.

Legal counsel for the chapter has different responsibilities. Many state chapters have incorporated as separate not-for-profit corporations. They are required by many states to file annual reports with the state and to file annual tax returns to the IRS. Legal counsel can assist in those arrangements.

As distinguished from legislative counsel, legal counsel will normally advise the chapter on legal matters and otherwise assist the chapter in avoiding unnecessary liability exposure arising from its activities.

Retaining a Lobbyist

The ACR will assist states considering hiring a lobbyist or legislative advocate with further information that might prove useful in determining the appropriate candidate for the job.

Once you have decided on a specific lobbyist or firm, your chapter will enter into a lobbying agreement. Make sure that the agreement spells out clearly what services are to be covered by the lobbying firm. You may also want to consider the following questions:

1. Are the services for a single issue, or will the lobbying firm be representing the radiologists' interests on all matters? Does it cover monitoring only or does it also include active lobbying on a given issue?
2. Who will determine what the prominent issues are?
3. What are the details of your arrangement? If your chapter wants specific accountability for services rendered, you may request that an itemized estimate accompany the agreement. Make sure that the agreement spells out both the terms and conditions for payment. Determine up front whether the lobbyist will be providing both regulatory and legislative coverage or will be representing you in the legislature only.
4. What is the term of the agreement?
5. What provisions are in the agreement which cover possible conflicts of interest?

6. Does the agreement allow the chapter discretion to replace the lobbyist if the chapter feels that another individual in the firm would represent the chapter's interests more thoroughly? Can the chapter designate the individual lobbyist to represent the chapter? Your chapter may want to note in the agreement how the lobbyist is to receive advice and take action. You may wish to designate the proper lines of communication to avoid confusion or conflicting information.

To best analyze the provisions in the agreement, you may want to have a separate legal counsel review the agreement prior to signing. Be sure to ask questions about the agreement and do not sign anything until you are completely comfortable with the provisions of the agreement.

Chapters that intend to lobby need to do so in compliance with appropriate state lobbying laws and regulations. Consult legal counsel for these requirements.

Furthermore, the chapter needs to be aware of its tax status to determine what percentage of the chapter's resources can be used for lobbying purposes. The College recommends that ACR chapters seek tax-exempt status from the IRS as 501 (c)(6) organizations. Such an entity can solicit and use its own funds to lobby on issues which are of interest to the organization's membership.

Choice of 501(c)(3) vs. 501(c)(6) Organizational Status

Organizations meeting criteria established as a 501(c)(6) entity are not limited in the amount of money devoted for lobbying purposes. However, if the organization engages in lobbying, its members may not be able to deduct as a business expense the portion of their dues payments which are attributable to lobbying expenses. In that event, the association must notify its members annually of the nondeductible portion of dues or alternatively pay a "proxy tax" on such expenditures. Chapters should be aware that the IRS's definition of lobbying for "dues nondeductibility" purposes is very specific and differs from other IRS definitions of "lobbying" in other parts of the Internal Revenue Code. Chapters are urged to consult with counsel concerning this issue.

In contrast, a 501(c)(3) organization, organized for "charitable," "educational," or "scientific" purposes, can devote only an "insubstantial" portion of its resources to lobbying activities. The IRS never has precisely defined "insubstantial" but the rule-of-thumb is that expenditures that do not exceed 5% of the annual budget for the organization are considered "insubstantial." 501(c)(3) organizations are also prohibited from participating in political (electioneering) activities and from forming a political action committee (PAC).

Because most state chapters of the College have a relatively small budget, the status of a 501(c)(6) society is the recommended model to pursue.

Chapter Executive Committee

While the government relations committee and lobbyists represent important components in an effective state government relations program, involvement of the chapter leadership is necessary if the goals and objectives of the chapter are to be presented to state policy makers. The state chapter's executive committee or board of directors must guide the decision-making process. Otherwise chapters run the risk of promoting policies that are inconsistent with larger priorities determined by the leadership.

Decisions in the political arena are made in an extremely fast-paced environment. It is essential that the chapter clearly define who makes ultimate decisions for the chapter. **Whoever has this responsibility should clarify lines of communication and should be certain a mechanism is in place so that decisions can be made quickly. There have been instances where chapter presidents have left town without making arrangements to deal with legislative emergencies should they arise.**

Political Action Committees (PACs)

Forming a political action committee (PAC) has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, PAC contributions can provide a mechanism for direct access to an elected official. Re-election constitutes job security for legislators. State legislators are always mindful of the next election. Money has become essential in political campaigns. There are some legislative offices that will keep lists of contributors on hand and will use this list prior to making appointments with the legislator.

There are also disadvantages with PACs. Operation of a PAC involves meeting many legal and accounting requirements. The paperwork and legal advice necessary to establish a PAC and comply with PAC laws can be tedious. Ironically, the benefit of access may also prove to be a disadvantage. There are some who feel that receipt of PAC contributions can alter the contributor's image of professionalism and objectivity.

Choosing the right candidate to support can have both positive and negative ramifications depending on the outcome of the election. A legislator will often know if your organization contributed to his or her opponent in the last election.

In 1999, the political arm of the ACR, the Radiology Advocacy Alliance (RAA), formed RADPAC, a bipartisan political action committee. RADPAC's goal is to support and elect pro-radiology candidates at the *federal level* through the voluntary contributions of RAA members. The formation of RADPAC was deemed to be necessary because both the ACR, as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and the RAA, as a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt organization, are prohibited from making political contributions of any kind.

Your lobbyist or legislative advocate should be able to advise you as to the advantages of setting up a PAC in your state. Make sure that the lobbyist or legal counsel familiarizes you with the costs associated with setting up the PAC and gives you guidance as to any PAC contribution limits and acceptable amounts to be given. In addition, RAA staff are also available to assist you with your PAC-related activities at the state level.

Legal Constraints

Once a decision for setting up a PAC has been made, your chapter should work with legal counsel to assure that you are in compliance with federal and state laws.

A political action committee is a separate segregated fund organized under federal and state election laws to provide a vehicle for corporations to contribute funds to political campaigns. Organizations with tax exempt status under Sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code are prohibited from establishing a PAC; consequently, legal advice should be obtained regarding your chapter's IRS status before organizing a PAC.

There are also state and federal electioneering laws. Federal election law governs fundraising and communications activity by PACs. There are limitations on the methods used to solicit PAC money as well as the amount that may be collected. Also, there are strict record-keeping requirements for PAC funds and precise filing rules. In addition, there are requirements which vary from state to state.

Quite separate and distinct from forming a PAC to contribute funds to a candidate's campaign is lobbying. As noted before, depending on its IRS status, a state chapter may become involved in lobbying efforts on issues pertinent to the chapter's interests. Although the PAC laws do not govern such lobbying activity, there may be state laws regarding such legislative efforts. Your chapter's legal counsel should advise you on the legal constraints to both campaign contributions and lobbying activity.

Making Contributions

Making contributions to candidates can often have the greatest impact when coordinated through your lobbyist, state legislative committee and executive committee. Generally, contributions are made under three categories: (1) position of the legislator; (2) ideology or party of the legislator or challenger; and (3) likelihood of victory of the legislator or challenger.

The first category involves the position of the legislator. Contributions are often made to those most influential on the type of legislation (e.g., health care) in which your chapter is interested. Your lobbyist should identify who the important committee

chairmen and leadership of your state's legislature are to key passage of particular legislation.

Many organizations will contribute strictly along ideological or partisan lines. This creates the possibility of alienating the other parties and can be detrimental to your chapter's purposes. Because issues are constantly changing and evolving, it is difficult to identify your friends and foes strictly by partisan lines. Your lobbyist, through past experience, should help you determine who has been friendly to medicine.

Finally, many organizations determine their contributions based on the candidate's likelihood to win. While the goal is to spend PAC funds as wisely as possible, selecting candidates based on their chance of winning is becoming increasingly difficult. In the past, incumbency was a tremendous advantage for a candidate and incumbents received the lion's share of PAC contributions. Beginning in 1992, the election results showed a more blurred pattern. In general, incumbents still fare well, but are not the lock they once were. State enactment of term limit statutes have made determining who is going to win even more difficult. Here again, your lobbyist or legislative advocate should help you determine perspective winners and losers.

There is no given formula for success within these three general categories. Some organizations have taken the easy way out and contribute to almost everyone. Not only is this an expensive alternative, but it may send mixed signals to the legislators. Other organizations will contribute on the basis of a legislator's past record on issues important to the organization.

Outside of PAC contributions, there are other avenues to assist a candidate with his or her election. For instance, your chapter may plan and hold a private fund-raiser for the legislator. Invite other radiologists and friends who may wish to make individual contributions to the legislator's campaign. This format also provides you with an opportunity to speak with the legislator in a relaxed atmosphere. Personally volunteering or having family members assist in the legislator's campaign by distributing literature or operating a telephone bank are also good ways of donating to the campaign. As always, consultation with an attorney or lobbyist will be necessary to determine the legality of alternative activities. However, alternatives such as these may provide a cost-effective option to establishing a PAC.

ACR Resources to Assist the States

The ACR has many resources to assist the state chapters in their state legislative efforts.

Staff

Through the Office of Council and Chapter Services, the ACR can provide chapters with the following types of assistance:

1. *Bill Analysis and Bill Writing*--The ACR will review and analyze legislation and its prospective impact on radiologists. The ACR will recommend changes to existing bill language to ameliorate the effect on radiology. On some issues, the College will develop model legislation for chapters to offer to state legislators.
2. *Legal Interpretation and Analysis*—Staff will assist chapters in determining the legal implications of legislation.
3. *Research and Information for Making Your Case*--The ACR has supplied studies, analyses, and surveys to assist past state legislative efforts. This information has provided the necessary data to make a sound case for radiology's issues.
4. *Written and Oral Testimony*--The ACR government relations department has developed written testimony for both federal and state legislative bodies and will assist state chapters in this regard. The government relations department will also assist those giving oral testimony with both scripts and how best to prepare for the hearing.
5. *Legislative Strategy*--The ACR Office of Council and Chapter Services will discuss legislative strategy with state lobbyists, government relations chairs or other state leaders. In addition, the ACR staff will identify individuals from other states from the informational network for your chapter to discuss an issue under consideration.
6. *On-Going Services*--The ACR offers the ACR State Legislative Network, an e-mail-based legislative information update, to chapter leaders to keep them informed of relevant radiology state legislative issues as they occur. The ACR will also develop action packs and listings of state legislation as needed.
7. *Advice*--As always, your chapter may contact the ACR Office of Council and Chapter Services to seek advice on any matter pertaining to your state government relations program.

Monetary Assistance

The ACR Board of Chancellors has developed criteria to assist specific requests for ACR support of state legislative activity. The following criteria are followed by the ACR Board of Chancellors:

1. The ACR may not devote a substantial part of its resources to efforts to influence legislation.
2. The College will financially support state legislative activity deemed to be precedential and of national significance if the legislation furthers the basic policies and purposes of the College.
3. A broad segment of the College's membership must be affected by the legislation.
4. The legislation has a reasonable likelihood of enactment.
5. Expenditures will be made only after the College's executive director, director of government relations and general counsel have reviewed the request and have presented a recommendation to the Board of Chancellors or Executive Committee.
6. Expenses supporting state legislative activity will be audited by the executive director. The need for continuing expenditures in a given situation will be reported to the Executive Committee or Board of Chancellors.

Any request for monetary assistance of state legislative activity should be directed to the ACR executive director.

A Question of Money

The ACR is aware of the financial constraints that many of the state chapters face. Many of the suggestions discussed thus far could cost the state chapter a significant sum of money. We recognize that in these difficult times the decision to incorporate these suggestions could require an increase in annual dues of the state chapter.

There are ways to establish a government relations program without incurring a large expense. With minimal administrative costs, you can develop a government relations committee, interact with and utilize the resources provided by the ACR, and communicate with your membership on a regular basis. Instead of hiring a lobbyist full-time, your chapter may hire a firm to monitor activity and decide on an issue-by-issue basis when a lobbyist is needed. While this approach may not provide the same level of consistency and safeguards as full-time lobbying, a chapter that has not had any state program would see a marked difference in its level of activity.

Only your chapter can decide what level of government relations activity is necessary to meet the demands placed on you by state legislation and regulations. While the ACR will assist you in these efforts, the onus for effecting the process rests with the chapter.

Conclusion

Action at the federal and state levels during the next few years could continue to change the course of health care delivery in our country. Radiologists, radiation oncologists, interventional radiologists, nuclear medicine physicians and medical physicists have always played an important role in determining their position in the health care delivery system and this should continue. Because of the current legislative climate it will now require more time and effort. It is critical that we work together in these critical times to meet the challenges ahead.