BROCATO & SHATTUCK

Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024
Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
Bill: Senate Bill 874 – Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities - Surgical Technologists
Position: **Favorable**

On behalf of our client the Maryland-Delaware Chapter of the Association of Surgical Technologists we support Senate Bill 874.

Surgical technologists are not regulated in most states. AST advocates to state legislatures for surgical technologists to be graduates of accredited programs and earn and maintain certification. The following states have laws related to education and certification of surgical technologists: Idaho (1991), Indiana (2009), Massachusetts (2012), Nevada (2017), New Jersey (2011), New York (2015), Oregon (2016), Pennsylvania (2020), South Carolina (2008), Tennessee (2013), Texas (2009), Virginia (2021), Connecticut (2023).

Who are Surgical Technologists?
- Certified Surgical Technologists not only serve as the surgeon's co-pilot and provide instruments and supplies to the surgeon, but they prevent patient death and harm related to medication, surgical fires, instruments and implants, infection, and bleeding.
- Surgical technologists are the surgical team member that maintain the sterile surgical field to ensure members of the surgical team adhere to sterile technique to prevent surgical site infections.
- As essential surgical team members, surgical technologists must perform very effectively to prevent "never events," including medication errors, surgical implant errors, unintended retained surgical items, patient burns, and incorrect site surgery.
- They operate complex surgical robotic equipment and handle cancer specimens, such as biopsy tissue.
- There are 128,900[1] surgical technologists employed nationwide including 1.930[2] in Maryland.

What is the Process to Become a Certified Surgical Technologist?
- An associate degree accredited education program is required. The standards for Surgical Technology programs are accredited either through a CAAHEP or ABHES. There are 7 accredited education programs geographically distributed in Maryland.
- Certification exam is through the NBSTSA and costs $190 if a member of AST or $290 if not.

What is Being Proposed?
- Surgical technologists must graduate from an accredited educational program and pass the certified surgical technologist exam. There are exceptions for all currently-employed surgical technologists and military-trained surgical technologists.
- Surgical technologists who have graduated from an accredited program but are not yet certified have 18 months to obtain certification.

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[1] https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/surgical-technologists.htm#tab-1
[2] https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes292055.htm

- Oversight is through the Department of Health to verify surgical technologist compliance upon request – no change, minimal effort by hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers.
- No new licensing regime – health care facilities verify the surgical technologist.
- Apprenticeships can be used as clinical experience in the credentialed education program.

For these reasons we ask for a **Favorable report on Senate Bill 874.**

For more information:
Barbara Brocato – barbara@bmbassoc.com
Dan Shattuck – dans@bmbassoc.com