

## **THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING ACR PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

As part of the overall reorganization of the ACR Commission and Committee structure, the Standards and Accreditation Commission (renamed the Quality and Safety Commission) was formed. It is one of eight operational commissions. The members of this commission are, to a large extent, composed of people who also serve on a specialty commission. There are eleven specialty commissions and each of these commissions has a series of operational committees, one of which is a Guidelines and Standards Committee. The chairpersons of these committees make up the membership of the Quality and Safety Commission. This guarantees a broad spectrum of specialty representation on the Commission as well as members from private practice settings and academic medical centers with a wide geographic distribution (see organizational matrix on next page).

The method for developing a practice guideline or technical standard starts with the specialty commissions or committees receiving suggestions for guidelines or standards from organizations, individual practicing radiologists, ACR State Chapters, or any other appropriate entity related to the specialty of radiology. A proposal form is submitted to the chair and vice-chair of the commission for approval.

Once approved, a draft is developed and then circulated throughout the guidelines committee for review and comment until deemed ready to submit for full member comment. If done collaboratively, a committee is formed with members of each collaborating society. The guideline is developed and then sent to the collaborative societies for review and comment.

The draft guideline or standard is available on the ACR Web site for on-line commenting during a three-week field review cycle. The ACR Web site provides access to the draft documents for all members to submit their comments online.

After each field review cycle, a Chair is appointed by the Council Steering Committee (CSC) and a subcommittee is formed. A conference call may be scheduled for a guideline/standard if comments were received during the field review. The subcommittee members include the principal drafters (drafting committee), Chairs of sponsoring Commission and Committee, Speaker, Vice-Speaker, 2-3 field review commenters, 2-3 guidelines committee members, collaborative committee members, ACR staff and legal counsel.

The revised draft from this conference call is then placed on the ACR Web site for an additional 3-week review period prior to the ACR Annual Meeting and Chapters Leadership Conference (AMCLC). If collaborative, the revised draft is sent to the collaborative society for approval. Comments are collated and provided to an assigned ACR Reference Committee to be considered as testimony at the AMCLC.

The approval process for collaborative guidelines during the AMCLC was revised in 2008. All guidelines, whether ACR only or collaborative, are treated in the same manner, allowing for testimony from the floor to be considered and draft language to be amended by the Reference Committee. The ACR also established a process to allow representatives at the AMCLC in order to provide input from the collaborating societies' on amendments to the collaborative guidelines proposed by ACR councilors.

The guidelines or standards that are approved at the AMCLC are published in a CD format and mailed to all College Members for implementation in their practices. The effective date for guidelines or standards is October first of that year.

This process provides opportunity for input from all sectors of radiology. The chairperson of the Quality and Safety Commission is most interested in this broad participation and invites comments as well as proposals for new practice guidelines or technical standards from all members of the American College of Radiology.