



## **FOR RELEASE**

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## **Medical Society Urges Broader Role for Sonographers**

CHICAGO -- (Business Wire) -- An international physicians group on Wednesday urged medical centers to discontinue restrictive scope of practice policies that prevent qualified sonographers from assisting in administration of ultrasound contrast agents (UCAs) when medically indicated.

"Sonographers play an extremely important role in delivering effective and cost-efficient patient care, and yet too many medical centers still have outdated policies that require a registered nurse or physician to administer UCAs -- even when trained and credentialed sonographers are available," according to Beverly Gorman, a member of the board of directors of the International Contrast Ultrasound Society (ICUS) and Director of Accreditation for Echocardiography at the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission.

"This can effectively deny patients access to enhanced ultrasound imaging where medically indicated, and many of those patients end up with unnecessary and more expensive 'big box' imaging," Gorman added.

According to the International Contrast Ultrasound Society board, which met in Chicago on Wednesday, the exclusion of qualified sonographers by these restrictive policies "can negatively impact patient care and outcomes," and alternative testing may expose patients to ionizing radiation, result in delays, and increase healthcare costs.

UCAs produce high quality images of tumors and organ blood vessels, and can dramatically improve detection of cardiac abnormalities and risk of heart attack or stroke, according to the ICUS statement adopted Wednesday.

UCAs are injected intravenously during an ultrasound scan and are metabolized and expelled from the body within minutes. UCAs are approved for use in adult and pediatric imaging by the US Food and Drug Administration, the European Medicines Agency, and their counterparts in Asia, the Americas and elsewhere.

ICUS policy, adopted Wednesday, now "strongly recommends" the adoption of scope of practice policies and procedures that permit qualified sonographers to gain peripheral venous access and administer UCAs -- that is, to start an intravenous line and inject the UCAs -- when medically indicated.

"There is absolutely no reason a qualified and credentialed sonographer should be prevented from assisting in a contrast enhanced ultrasound procedure, which is an extremely safe, inexpensive, reliable and radiation-free option for imaging the heart, liver, kidneys, and other organs and tumors throughout the body," according to Dr. Steven Feinstein, a professor of medicine at Rush University in Chicago and co-president of ICUS.

“UCAs offer tremendous benefits to patients, and it is past time to recognize the important role that qualified sonographers play in these procedures,” added Dr. Stephanie Wilson, a professor of radiology at the University of Calgary and co-president of ICUS.

**ABOUT ICUS:**

*ICUS is an international medical society that is dedicated to advancing the appropriate use of contrast enhanced ultrasound to improve patient care. ICUS members include physicians, scientists, and other ultrasound imaging professionals in approximately 60 countries. For more information about ICUS, please visit [www.icus-society.org](http://www.icus-society.org).*

**CONTACTS:**

International Contrast Ultrasound Society

Mark W. Weller, 202-276-7421 or 202-626-8363, [mweller@polsinelli.com](mailto:mweller@polsinelli.com)

Linda M. Feinstein, 847-624-1844 or 312-876-2563, [Linda.Feinstein@Dentons.com](mailto:Linda.Feinstein@Dentons.com)