

A Volunteer Role for Every R.T.

Simple Steps You Can Take Today

BY DIANE HUTTON, B.A., R.T.(R)

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Be an advocate for our profession. Improve the world we live in.

You've likely heard the catch phrases designed to inspire you to volunteer.

And they're true. But I want to challenge you to look at volunteering from a different perspective — as an exchange.

My first involvement with volunteerism was through my state affiliate society and my local district. In exchange for giving time and money to my profession, I gained the opportunity to fill a need, to share my knowledge, to accept new challenges and meet new people, and to gain valuable leadership skills. Volunteering allows me to give back and be an advocate for the profession I love.

As R.T.s, we are uniquely qualified when it comes to volunteering for advocacy efforts. Our ability to empathize with our patients puts us in the driver's seat. Only the medical imaging professional knows what it takes to care for patients in the radiology department, and we can use our knowledge and skills when advocating our needs to legislators.

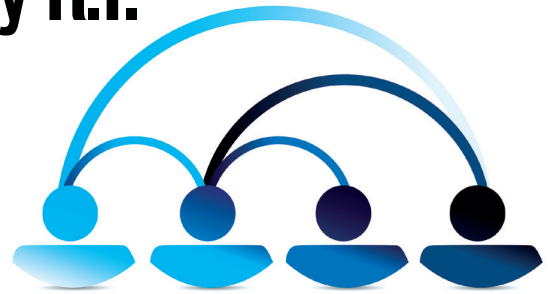
Giving even a small amount of time lends value to our profession and can benefit you. Getting started is as simple as this three-step process.

STEP ONE: DECIDE HOW MUCH TIME YOU'RE WILLING TO DEVOTE TO VOLUNTEERING.

It is such an individual decision, and it depends on where you are in your life. A technologist can serve on the Committee on R.T. Advocacy, which requires a time commitment of one to two hours a week. If you have young children at home, committee tasks such as participating in online meetings and making contact with legislators can be completed after bedtime. This involvement makes a huge difference in getting the word out about what we do each day for our patients.

STEP TWO: DECIDE WHERE YOUR PASSION LIES.

So many things need to be done; it should be easy to find at least one activity that matches your skills and passions. You might get involved with legislative issues, make calls, send e-mails, create social media posts or help organize a conference. These are all great ways to volunteer that don't have to take a lot of time.



STEP THREE: FIND THE RIGHT AVENUE — STATE LEVEL, LOCAL DISTRICT OR THE ASRT.

When I first decided to get involved in my affiliate, I attended board meetings as a visitor, which was a great opportunity to observe, ask questions and learn the ropes. I got to know the board members and told them I was interested in getting involved, and I was later asked to take a position. I'm now serving as president of both my state affiliate and district organization, and I also volunteer through the ASRT.

What Every R.T. Can Do

No matter how much time you have, there's something you can do every day to help promote our profession and, therefore, yourself. Be an advocate.

- Talk to patients and fellow health care professionals about what you do. Educate them about the important part radiology plays in patient care.
- Present yourself as a professional. Part of this includes education. Continuing to boost our educational status will help others perceive us as professionals.
- Educate yourself about the issues. Visit the ASRT website and use the tools there to e-mail legislators about our profession. To become knowledgeable and involved, check your state affiliate for news relevant to R.T.s.

If we do only one thing for our profession, we should serve as advocates. If we don't, who will? *S*

Diane Hutton is president of the Missouri Society of Radiologic Technologists and vice chairman of the Committee on R.T. Advocacy. She joined the ASRT in 1994 and is a member of the Education and Radiography chapters.

SIDE NOTE

To learn more about volunteering for the ASRT, visit www.asrt.org/volunteers.