

POSITION STATEMENT ON STATE REGULATION OF RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

As Adopted February 12, 2003

Retired Aug 10, 2018 - replicated in Statute

Breathing life into your career

The Michigan Society for Respiratory Care (MSRC), a chartered affiliate of the American Association for Respiratory Care, is committed to ensuring that the highest quality of respiratory care preventative, diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services are provided to all individuals accessing health care in the State of Michigan. The MSRC finds that:

1. Respiratory therapists are direct patient care providers who function with significant independent and unsupervised action and discretionary judgement, under the prescription of a physician.
2. Clear evidence exists which demonstrates a significant danger to the public's health, safety, and welfare by inadequately trained staff performing respiratory care services. Respiratory therapists are responsible for managing a patient's life support functions and are subject to the provisions of the Michigan Do-Not-Resuscitate Procedures Act. Permanent disability, coma, or death may result from inappropriate or incompetent delivery of respiratory care services.
3. As early as 1981, the former Department of Licensing and Regulation Health Occupations Council recognized that respiratory care "does possess a (unique) body of specialized skill and knowledge which is vital to safe and competent practice and it therefore should be subject to the provisions of the Public Health Code." Training of other health professionals in the practice of respiratory care is very limited.
4. No statutory requirements currently exist for the minimum training, education, and clinical competence of respiratory therapists in Michigan. Michigan is one of only 6 states (MI, AL, AK, HI, VT, and WY) which do not provide for state regulation of respiratory therapists.
5. The public cannot be effectively protected by other means.
6. There is clear evidence that state regulation of respiratory therapists will not increase health care costs, will not increase wages, and will not decrease the supply of respiratory therapists available in the work force.
7. State regulation of respiratory therapists has received unanimous bipartisan support in the Michigan legislature, and will generate a significant net income to the State of Michigan.

For these reasons, the MSRC strongly supports the regulation of respiratory therapists in the State of Michigan, consistent with the 1995 MSRC Resolution on Professional Competency and the 1996 State of Michigan Health Care Mission Statement. State regulation of respiratory therapists should mandate minimum levels of education, training, and clinical competence consistent with national standards of practice, as well as prescribing continuing education requirements to keep pace with ever-changing clinical operations and evidence-based clinical practice. State regulation should not "grandfather" practitioners who do not possess either a CRT or RRT credential from the National Board for Respiratory Care. Further, this regulation should not require new or additional third party reimbursement or mandated worker's compensation benefits, enable independent practice by respiratory therapists, deplete the workforce, or restrict access into the profession.