

ASRT Publish Data on Paucity of RT Vacancies in U.S.

The vacancy rate for radiographers has continued to decline in recent years and is now at 2.1 percent, according to a staffing survey recently conducted by the [American Society of Radiologic Technologists](#).

The vacancy rate, which represents the number of positions that are open and actively being recruited, is the lowest since the ASRT began collecting data in 2003. A vacancy rate of 2.1 percent for radiographers means that for every 100 budgeted full-time positions, an estimated 2.1 are unfilled.

"Vacancy rates continue to drop year after year, signaling that the job market for radiologic technologists has tightened considerably since the profession experienced its last personnel shortage in the early 2000s," said ASRT Vice President of Education and Research Myke Kudlas, M.Ed., R.T.(R)(QM). "In radiography, for example, our staffing surveys showed vacancy rates of 10.3 percent in 2003, 7.7 percent in 2004, 5.4 percent in 2005, 4.5 percent in 2006, 3.7 percent in 2007 and 3.4 percent in 2008. The vacancy rate for 2009 was 2.5 percent, and the current rate is 2.1 percent."

Vacancy rates for other medical imaging disciplines and specialties also dropped between 2003 and 2010, according to the staffing survey:

- Computed tomography technologists, from 8.5 percent in 2003 to 2.6 percent in 2010.
- Magnetic resonance technologists, from 9 percent to 3.4 percent.
- Mammographers, from 7.2 percent to 1.8 percent.
- Nuclear medicine technologists, from 10.9 percent to 2.1 percent.
- Cardiovascular-interventional technologists, from 14.6 percent to 3.5 percent.
- Sonographers, from 11.7 percent to 4.6 percent.

In addition, the staffing survey showed that 54.4 percent of respondents are not currently recruiting technologists for their radiology departments. A total of 1,654 managers and directors of U.S. hospital-based radiology departments or facilities responded to the survey in June 2010.

Other ASRT research shows that entering-class enrollments in radiologic science educational programs have declined each year since 2007. Enrollments typically decrease when staffing demand is low and increase when demand is high. "This may indicate that programs are reducing enrollment numbers in response to the low vacancy rates," said Mr. Kudlas. The enrollment research was performed in late 2009.

The ASRT performs staffing and enrollment surveys to provide data to managers, educational program directors and prospective students so they can make informed decisions, said Mr. Kudlas. "We hope that this data is used by decision makers to help to flatten out the peaks and valleys in staffing levels that have occurred in the profession during the past 20 years."

However, Mr. Kudlas noted that future demand for radiologic technologists is difficult to predict and impossible to control. "Many variables will influence future demand for medical imaging professionals, including an aging American population, the impact of health care legislation, exam reimbursement trends, advances in technology, and the strength of the nation's overall economy," he said. "Any one of these variables can dramatically shift the balance between work force supply and demand."

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