



# Portrait of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Technologist's Perspective

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For most of us, this is the first time in our lives that we, as health care providers, have faced an enormously uncertain environment in the ever-changing landscape of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Our daily lives have been turned upside down in the last several months. It is very unsettling to know that when we walk into our place of work, there will be yet another set of challenges to face and changes to accept, all of which are out of our control. Stress, fear, and anxiety levels are peaking at work and at home. Amidst this crisis, how does one maintain work-life satisfaction when it feels like our surroundings are forcing us into work-life survival? What can we do to conquer the overwhelming circumstances surrounding COVID-19?

Most technologists have chosen their professional path because of a strong desire to help people. We want to make a difference in each of the lives we encounter every day. Currently, mammography technologists' daily work has become an unfamiliar environment. Technologists are being reassigned to different areas within their organizations to assist or provide relief for others. After years of performing mammography as a specialized modality, many technologists have had to sharpen unused skills and perform nonroutine duties like portable radiography and general radiology examinations. Others generously volunteer to go wherever help is needed, such as assembling 3-dimensional printed face masks, helping set up temporary triage units, setting up departments in alternate locations, helping with monitoring stations, or delivering supplies. Despite the efforts to continue to employ mammographers, many have been laid off with or without pay and face the uncertainty of when and if returning to work will be possible in the near future.

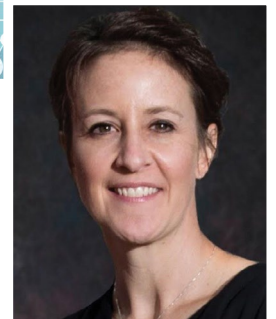
Staff members can use their time wisely and in creative ways during this period of uncertainty. Recommendations and guidelines change rapidly. Therefore, it is especially important for staff to stay informed.

- Keep up to date with breast imaging practices and ACR accreditation available online from the ACR/SBI and frequently review the resources at <https://www.acr.org/Clinical-Resources/COVID-19-Radiology-Resources> and <https://www.sbi-online.org/RESOURCES/COVID-19Resources.aspx>.

- Stay informed regarding Mammography Quality Standards Act compliance information available at <https://www.fda.gov/radiation-emitting-products/mammography-quality-standards-act-and-program/mqsa-inspection-information-related-covid-19>.
- Designate a staff member to make sure updated information is received and understood by the rest of the department, especially employees who are not working.
- Technologists and radiologists should collaborate to create new workflows to complete everyday tasks in the safest manner.
- Maintain proper quality control testing and records as appropriate with necessary documentation during this time.
- Staff can further use their time to:
  - Complete ongoing projects
  - Pursue online educational opportunities and earn credit
  - Develop strategies for ongoing quality improvement measures to address special circumstances during and after a pandemic
  - Develop a strategy to accommodate the influx of patient examinations after the pandemic and develop a tracking system to ensure that postponed examinations are rescheduled

A whiteboard in the technologist work area can be a useful tool for maintaining topics to be discussed at daily and/or weekly department huddles.

In addition to the uncertainties of our jobs, the challenges we face in our personal lives are abundant. Society and health care professionals and their families have had to cope with childcare facility closures, school closures with implementation of online learning, sick or isolated friends and family members, and the reduced availability of household necessities. Social distancing results in decreased in-person interaction and has the potential to make some individuals vulnerable to loneliness, boredom, and negative emotions. As caregivers in the health care system, we



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**Table 1. Breast Imaging–Specific Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)**

EPA 1a	Screening mammography
EPA 1b	Screening ultrasound
EPA 1c	Screening magnetic resonance imaging
EPA 2	Diagnostic imaging
EPA 3	Biopsies
EPA 4	Evaluating patients with new or previous breast cancer
EPA 5	Image-guided localization

**Table 2. Entrustable Professional Activity Supervision Scale****Trainee is trusted to:**

1. Observe only
2. Execute with direct supervision and coaching
3. Execute with reactive supervision (on request, quickly available)
4. Execute with indirect supervision (at a distance or post hoc)
5. Execute without supervision
6. Supervise and train junior colleagues

**Not yet assessable****Acknowledgments**

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must remember that we can still make a significant difference. Even when circumstances change our daily work that has been a source of self-satisfaction and purpose, we can still find ways to make a difference. As the saying goes, “Be faithful in small things, for it is in them that your strength lies.”

Especially now, we must remember that every small act of kindness and compassion we perform can cause a tiny but significant ripple that will eventually reach someone who needs it most. One person can make a difference in every simple act. Examples of small acts:

- Leave your coworker a note on their computer screen wishing them good morning or provide them with a funny joke to start their day with laughter.
- Call, message, or video chat with your coworkers and friends who are not working.
- Leave a thank-you message on your radiologist's workstation monitor.
- Put uplifting messages in your windows so staff and patients can see them.
- Make a special treat to bring to work or to a friend.

SMILE! Several years ago, I developed a friendship with a patient with terminal disease. One day I had numerous troublesome and frustrating challenges. I walked around the corner and saw my patient sitting in the waiting room. I put on my best smile and said, “Hi! I see the sun is shining today.” The patient replied, “It is, now that I saw your smiling face!” Remember, your smile can be seen in your eyes despite the vital use of your face mask.

I wish all of you the best of health, safety, and fulfillment during this difficult time.

**President's Column (continued from page 3)**

As we look forward to the upcoming months, we all will be working hard to recover from today's devastating human condition. As you make your way through that challenging time, please remember that you are surrounded by a virtual community of all of us who also are making that same journey. Together we will continue to be strong and to save lives through our dedication and commitment.

I wish you each safety, peace, and happiness. See you in Savannah!



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