



CARRINGTON COLLEGE

Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Program Handbook

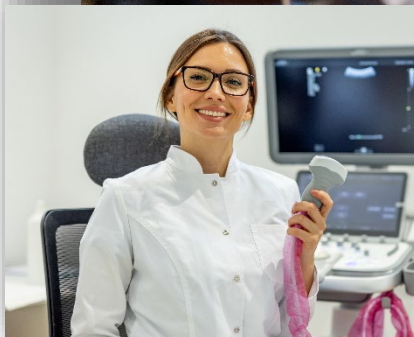


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Carrington College reserves the right to revise, modify, or update the policies, procedures, or information contained in this handbook at any time without prior notice.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Welcome, Future Sonographers!

Welcome to the Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program at Carrington College. We are pleased that you have chosen to pursue your education with us. As you begin this journey, we are committed to providing you with a high-quality, student-centered learning environment designed to support the development of the knowledge, technical skills, and professional behaviors necessary for a successful career as a diagnostic medical sonographer.

The Carrington College Academic Catalog and Student Handbook are your primary sources for institutional policies. This Program Handbook is intended to supplement those resources by outlining policies, procedures, and expectations specific to the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program. It serves as a practical guide to support your success throughout your training.

It is essential that you review this information carefully, as it will serve as a foundation for your daily responsibilities and long-term progress. Your success in the program depends on active participation, consistent engagement, and personal accountability. We encourage you to approach your studies with focus, adaptability, and a strong work ethic.

You are responsible for following the policies and procedures outlined in this document, the academic catalog, and the student handbook.

We look forward to supporting you as you begin your journey in the dynamic and rewarding field of sonography.

Introduction to the Program

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program is a 75-week curriculum designed to prepare students for entry-level positions as diagnostic medical sonographers. The program provides a comprehensive foundation in human anatomy, physiology, medical terminology, patient care, and the physical principles of ultrasound. Students receive focused instruction in sonographic imaging of the abdomen, small parts, obstetrics, gynecology, and vascular systems. Training includes a balanced combination of classroom learning, hands-on lab practice, and a supervised clinical externship, providing students with valuable real-world experience in a professional healthcare setting. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates are eligible to sit for certification exams administered by the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® (ARDMS).

Program Goal

The goal of the Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS) program at Carrington College is to prepare competent, entry-level medical diagnostic sonographers who demonstrate clinical proficiency, critical thinking, effective communication, and professional behavior in a variety of healthcare settings. Graduates will be equipped with the technical and interpersonal skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to patient care and diagnostic processes.

Program Philosophy

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program is rooted in the belief that excellence in healthcare begins with a strong foundation in both technical knowledge and compassionate patient care. We are committed to fostering a learning environment that promotes clinical competence, ethical practice, critical reasoning, and lifelong learning. Through hands-on training, real-world experience, and the development of professional values, the program empowers students to meet the evolving needs of the medical imaging field and to serve as responsible, reflective, and collaborative healthcare professionals.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this program, the successful student will be able to:

1. Evaluate normal anatomy and physiology using proper medical terminology.
2. Exhibit appropriate patient care.
3. Demonstrate the utilization of basic principles of ultrasound, image acquisition, and evaluation and selection of representative images.
4. Perform abdomen, superficial structures, small parts, OB/GYN, and vascular ultrasound procedures and scanning techniques.
5. Determine pathologies, congenital anomalies, lab values, and differential diagnoses.
6. Relate and apply concepts of communication, reasoning, critical analysis, ethical behavior, and appropriate interpersonal interaction to situations in his or her career and personal life.
7. Demonstrate the social skills, professional appearance, attitudes, and behavior that employers expect of all Carrington College graduates.
8. Evaluate normal anatomy and physiology using proper medical terminology.
9. Exhibit appropriate patient care.
10. Demonstrate the utilization of basic principles of ultrasound, image acquisition, and evaluation and selection of representative images.
11. Perform abdomen, superficial structures, small parts, OB/GYN, and vascular ultrasound procedures and scanning techniques.
12. Determine pathologies, congenital anomalies, lab values, and differential diagnoses.

13. Relate and apply concepts of communication, reasoning, critical analysis, ethical behavior, and appropriate interpersonal interaction to situations in his or her career and personal life.
14. Demonstrate the social skills, professional appearance, attitudes, and behavior that employers expect of all Carrington College graduates.

Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography Code of Ethics - 2024

This Code of Ethics aims to promote excellence in patient care by fostering responsibility and accountability among diagnostic medical sonographers, thereby maintaining and elevating the integrity of the profession. It serves as a guide and framework for addressing ethical issues in clinical settings, business practices, education, and research.

Students are expected to exhibit ethical and professional behavior at all times while enrolled in the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program and will be held accountable to the SDMS Code of Ethics for the Profession of Diagnostic Medical Ultrasound while fulfilling their clinical practicum course requirements. Students shall uphold and abide by each of the principles of the Code (see Appendix 1).

DMS Professional Membership

Becoming a member of a professional organization is an excellent way for students to further their knowledge of the profession and to stay abreast of current and emerging trends and requirements. DMS has two key organizations: The American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) and The Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS).

AIUM is the only professional association solely dedicated to medical ultrasound. SDMS was founded to promote, advance, and educate its members and the medical community in the science of diagnostic medical sonography. SDMS serves as a network of sonographers across all specialty areas, sonography students, educators, physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers who practice or have an interest in diagnostic medical sonography. Benefits of membership include:

1. Association with practicing sonographers, physicians, and students
2. Access to DMS Professional Journals
3. Participation in an online community
4. Discounts on continuing education courses
5. Access to an online learning center
6. Attendance at ultrasound conferences and seminars
7. Reduced fees for the National Certification Examination
8. Salary and career resources
9. Eligibility for scholarships and grants

American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM)

14750 Sweitzer Lane, Ste. 100

Laurel, MD 20707

(800) 638-5352

<https://www.aium.org/>

Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS)

2745 Dallas Parkway, Ste. 350

Plano, TX 75093

(800) 229-9506

<https://www.sdms.org/>

Note: Carrington College does not endorse any one organization, nor does it require students to become members. The information provided above is purely for informational purposes.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROFESSION

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers specialize in creating images, known as sonograms or ultrasounds, that depict the body's organs and tissues. Sonography uses high-energy sound waves to produce images of the inside of the body. The sonographer uses an instrument called a transducer to scan parts of the patient's body that are being examined. The transducer emits pulses of sound that bounce back, causing echoes. The echoes form an image on a computer that physicians use for diagnosis.

Scope of Practice

The professional responsibilities of a sonographer include:

- Preparing patients for procedures, obtaining medical history, and answering questions
- Preparing, operating, and maintaining sonographic imaging equipment
- Reviewing images for quality and adequate coverage to assist in diagnoses
- Identifying diagnostic information, including differences between normal and abnormal images
- Analyzing diagnostic information and provide summary information to physicians
- Maintaining patient records

Many sonographers also assist in electronic record-keeping and computerized image storage. In addition, sonographers may have managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Specialization

There are several areas of specialization in the field of sonography:

- **Abdomen (AB):** Evaluation of the soft tissues, blood vessels, and organs of the abdomen, as well as that of small part structures such as the thyroid and testicles
- **Breast (BR):** Frequently used to evaluate breast lumps and other abnormalities that are found with screening or mammography
- **Obstetrics/Gynecology (OB/GYN):** Evaluation of the developing fetus and the female reproductive system
- **Musculoskeletal (RMSKS):** Evaluation of muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, and joints throughout the body
- **Vascular (RVT):** Evaluation of the blood flow through blood vessels
- **Cardiac* (RDCS):** Evaluation of the anatomy and function of the heart and related blood vessels
- **Fetal Echocardiography* (FE):** Evaluation of normal and abnormal fetal cardiac anatomy, physiology, pathology and hemodynamics before delivery.

- **Pediatric Sonography* (PS):** Evaluation of the head, spine, chest, hips/ joints, and the male and female genitourinary system of the pediatric patient

*These specialties are not covered in the Carrington College curriculum.

Practice Settings and Work Environment

Sonographers may choose to work in medical clinics, hospitals, private-practice physicians' offices, public health facilities, laboratories, and other medical settings, performing examinations in their areas of specialization. Most full-time sonographers work full-time; they may have evening and/or weekend hours. They may also be on call per diem and must be ready to report to work at short notice.

Credentialing and Professional Certifications

Graduates of this program earn an Associate of Science degree and the following certifications: CPR, HIPAA, and bloodborne pathogens.

While in school, students take the Sonography Principles and Instrumentation (SPI) examination. The American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® (ARDMS) SPI exam is the first step toward earning future ARDMS credentials. It assesses the essential physical principles and instrumentation knowledge, skills, and abilities required for sonography professionals and students.

To earn RDMS, RDCS, RVT, and RMSKS credentials, you must pass the ARDMS SPI exam and a corresponding specialty examination within five years. After passing the ARDMS SPI exam, you can earn additional credentials without having to retake the SPI exam, provided you maintain an active status.

The College does not guarantee students will successfully pass these exams or be certified or licensed as a result of completing the program.

Carrington College enjoys registry status with the [American Registry of Radiologic Technologists \(ARRT\)](#), which provides students a pathway to credentialing without a required number of post-graduate clinical/experiential hours.

Upon graduation, students will be eligible to sit for the following exams, in the order noted, which are required to obtain certification through the [American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® \(ARDMS\)](#). After successfully passing these exams, students will earn the Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (RDMS) credential. An alternative exam pathway is available to graduates who have earned a previous health studies credential (please see the Program Director for more information).

1. [American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® \(ARDMS\) Sonography Principles and Instrumentation \(SPI\) Exam](#) – this exam may be taken upon successfully passing DMS 110: Ultrasound Physics & Instrumentation.

2. [American Registry of Radiologic Technologists \(ARRT\) Exam](#) – this exam may be taken upon graduation from the program.
3. [ARDMS Specialty Exam](#) – see Prerequisite 5. This exam may be taken upon successfully passing the ARRT exam.

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (AART)

1255 Northland Drive
St. Paul, MN 55120-1155

877.560.ARRT (2778) - toll-free or [651.687.0048](#)

American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography® (ARDMS)

1401 Rockville Pike
Suite 600
Rockville, MD 20852-1402

800.541.9754 option 1 or [301.738.8401](#)

PROGRAM POLICIES, STANDARDS, & PROTOCOLS

Student Responsibilities

As a Diagnostic Medical Sonography student, you are responsible for:

- Taking ownership of your learning and skill mastery.
- Maintaining professional behavior in all settings.
- Actively participating in program assessments and surveys.
- Following Carrington College and clinical site policies.
- Communicating promptly and professionally with faculty and staff clinical sites.

Student-Faculty Communication

- *Email* – You are required to use your Carrington College email account when communicating with instructors or classmates. Check your email daily for updates and notifications. You can access your account via Outlook at <https://myapps.microsoft.com/> (Outlook envelope icon). We strongly encourage you to set up email on your smartphone. For help, contact the IT Help Desk at help@Carrington.edu
- *Microsoft Teams* – Students will set up a Teams account for communication with instructors. You are expected to check Teams messages daily.
- *Canvas* – Instructors post important course updates and announcements in Canvas. Be sure to check Canvas regularly to stay current with class information.

Attendance

- Didactic and Lab Courses – You are expected to attend all classroom sessions. Missed in-class assignments will not be able to be made up unless otherwise arranged with the course faculty. See the Academic Catalog for the full policy.
- Absences – Students who are approaching a 15% absence rate in any course or cumulative term will be required to meet with the faculty and/or Program Director to develop a Student Success Plan (SSP) to identify any factors that may improve the student's attendance. Absenteeism exceeding over 15% of any course may result in removal from the program.
- Clinical Rotations – Attendance at all scheduled clinical hours is mandatory. Missed hours must be made up before the end of the term. Excessive absences may result in termination. When attending clinical rotations:
 - You must arrive on time.
 - If you are absent or late, notify your Clinical Coordinator/Program Director and the clinical site at least one hour before your scheduled shift. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the site.
 - Completion of all required hours and cases is required for graduation.

- Students are required to attend all scheduled clinical rotations throughout the term.
- If a clinical day falls on a holiday, make-up hours must be arranged promptly.
- No attendance can be tracked between terms. Please work with your Clinical Coordinator/Program Director when scheduling make-up.

Standards for Professional Appearance

Professional dress prepares you for expectations in the workplace. Carrington College requires all students to follow uniform standards as outlined in the **Student Handbook**. Failure to follow the dress code while on campus or at clinical sites may result in disciplinary action.

Note: Some clinical sites may have additional requirements regarding jewelry, covering tattoos, piercings, hair coloring, or other aspects of professional appearance. You are expected to comply with all site-specific policies while on assignment. Failure to follow these requirements may result in dismissal from the clinical site and could jeopardize your standing in the program.

Assessment Retake Policy

In addition to the college's Late Assignment Policy, the following are the DMS program's policies regarding missed assignments:

- Students will NOT be allowed to make up missed quizzes.
- If a student is going to be absent on a day of an examination, the student must notify the course faculty prior to examination time of their absence. Students will NOT be allowed to make up a missed exam unless the faculty has been notified of the absence prior to the start of the class.
- Make-up work is at the discretion of the faculty and Program Director.

Laboratory Skills

The skills lab simulates a clinic environment and allows you to practice essential skills. Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared to participate.
- Notify the instructor if you will be late.
- Take responsibility for skill mastery and active participation.

Lab Guidelines

1. No food or drinks.
2. PPE required at all times.
3. No cell phones unless permitted by the instructor.
4. Handle all equipment carefully; report spills/breakage immediately.

5. Maintain clean and organized lab spaces.
6. Report any injuries immediately.
7. Be prepared for competency check-offs.
8. Request additional practice if needed.
9. Accept constructive feedback and stay focused.

Risks and Hazards of the Profession

Students in the DMS program may be exposed to hazards during laboratory and clinical training, including:

- Eye strain
- Musculoskeletal strain
- Ergonomic disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome
- Sharps exposure from patient IVs and ports
- Exposure to chemicals
- Exposure to pathogens from bodily fluids when interacting with patients (bloodborne and airborne pathogens)
- Medications and chemical agents
- Sharps and surgical instruments
- Radiation exposure
- Musculoskeletal strain from lifting/moving items over 50 lbs., standing for long periods, bending, reaching, pushing, or pulling

To reduce risks, students must consistently:

- Use required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Follow universal precautions and infection control standards
- Apply safe ergonomic and body mechanics practices

Students are encouraged to consult their healthcare provider about these demands prior to and during enrollment. Participation in the program indicates acknowledgment and acceptance of these risks.

For questions, contact the DMS Program Director at your campus.

CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Clinical Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Clinical education is an essential component of the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program at Carrington College. While each clinical affiliation site has its own specific expectations, the overall objective of clinical education is to provide students with the opportunity to apply and integrate knowledge and skills gained in the classroom and laboratory into real-life clinical settings.

Clinical experience allows students to:

- Participate directly in ultrasound exams and procedures under supervision.
- Apply sterile techniques during procedures.
- Improve time management, adaptability, and teamwork in a fast-paced environment.
- Refine communication and professional behavior within a multidisciplinary healthcare team.

Although many competencies are introduced and practiced in the laboratory setting, true mastery can only be achieved through direct clinical participation. Externship assignments enable students to validate their approach as future sonographers, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and gain exposure to the expectations of the radiology team in professional practice.

Clinical Placement Structure

Students will participate in clinical rotations. Clinical placements are designed to provide progressive, hands-on training in a variety of settings. Students must successfully complete all prerequisite coursework and be in good academic standing to advance into clinical rotations.

The Clinical Coordinator and Program Director reserve the right to require additional preparation or remediation as necessary to support student success in the clinical environment.

Student Responsibilities Prior to Attending Clinicals

Before beginning clinical rotations, students are required to establish and maintain the required clinical progression documentation. Students will work with the Clinical Coordinator to ensure compliance.

These items may include the following, based on clinical site requirements:

- Background check (must be clear)
- Drug screen (must be negative)
- All required immunizations and documentation

Refer to your clinical coordinator regarding required timelines and deadlines. These deadlines ensure timely clearance for clinical placement.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in one of the following:

- A delayed clinical start, or
- The clinical site being reassigned to another student.

Students who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to begin clinical rotations until compliance is achieved.

Student Responsibilities in Clinical Education

- **Transportation:** Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from clinical sites.
- **Compensation:** Clinical rotations are learning experiences; students are not employees and will not be compensated.
- **Professional Conduct:** Students must adhere to Carrington College policies as well as all clinical site rules, including dress code, attendance, confidentiality, and professional behavior.
- **Schedule Compliance:** Students must follow the clinical schedule provided. Adjustments may only be made with approval from the Clinical Coordinator and site preceptor.

Goals of Clinical Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Clinical education aims to:

- Provide opportunities for students to practice and apply sonography skills and sterile/clean techniques.
- Expand academic knowledge through real-world radiology cases.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration with radiologists, nurses, and other healthcare providers.
- Promote professional behaviors consistent with sonography standards.
- Foster problem-solving and critical-thinking skills under real clinical conditions.
- Expose students to a variety of radiology specialties to prepare them as well-rounded entry-level diagnostic medical sonographers.

Evaluation and Remediation

Clinical performance is evaluated by site preceptors and monitored by the Clinical Coordinator and Program Director. Failure to meet course objectives or clinical site expectations may result in:

- Remediation, with additional learning activities or lab practice.
- Extension of clinical hours (up to one week) to demonstrate improvement.
- Reassignment to a different site, if available.

- Failure of the externship course, which could result in program withdrawal.

Criteria for remediation or failure include:

- Failure to consistently maintain safe practice standards.
- Non-compliance with program or site policies.
- Inability to apply sonography knowledge and skills to patient care.
- Excessive absenteeism.

Students are covered under Carrington College's liability insurance while at clinicals. Patients also retain the right to refuse care by a student, and students must immediately notify their clinical instructor if such a request occurs.

Clinical Attendance and Hour Requirements

To meet graduation requirements, students must complete all scheduled clinical hours. Any missed clinical hours must be made up by the end of the term. Failure to complete the required hours will result in the inability to progress to the next term or graduate. Excessive absences may result in dismissal from the program.

Punctuality and Attendance Expectations:

- Arrive on time for all scheduled clinical externship shifts.
- Notify both the Clinical Coordinator or Program Director *and* the clinical site if you will be absent or late. Failure to provide proper notice may result in dismissal from the clinical site.
- Students are required to attend their assigned clinical site for the full duration of the course, regardless of whether clinical hours or skill requirements have been completed early.
- If a clinical shift falls on a holiday, the missed hours must be made up at the earliest possible opportunity, in coordination with the clinical site.

Course-Specific Requirements:

- DMS191: Minimum of 384 hours
- DMS201: Minimum of 576 hours

Clinical Professionalism Standards

Carrington College expects all students to demonstrate professionalism, punctuality, and appropriate behavior at clinical sites. Reports of unprofessional behavior, repeated tardiness, or other concerns from a clinical site will be addressed promptly to ensure patient safety and a productive learning environment.

First Violation

- If a clinical site reports a student for any concerns, including but not limited to behavioral, skills, punctuality, or professionalism concerns, the student will

immediately meet with the Clinical Coordinator.

- During this meeting, the student will participate in the development of a Student Success Plan (SSP), outlining corrective actions, goals, and expectations for improvement.
- The Clinical Coordinator will collaborate with the clinical site to determine if the student may continue rotations under the SSP, which may include more frequent check-ins with the clinical coordinator, additional remediation, or other coursework.
- The student may continue at the site with the understanding that any further incidents could result in removal.

Note: The clinical site reserves the right to refuse to allow the student to return at this stage.

Second Violation

- If a second behavioral violation occurs, the student will immediately be removed from the clinical site.
- The student may be required to continue check-ins with the Clinical Coordinator, complete additional remediation, or participate in other coursework as directed.
- Removal from the site will result in the student being unable to complete the required clinical hours for the course, which will result in failure of the course.

Note: Clinical hours from the failed term do not transfer but completed case requirements will transfer. The student will be placed on the list for a clinical site assignment at the start of the following term, with no guarantee of immediate placement.

Additionally, if a student is removed from a site for any reason, the student will be unable to complete the required clinical hours for the course, resulting in a failure of the course.

APPENDICES

Code of Ethics for the Profession of Diagnostic Medical Ultrasound

PREAMBLE

The goal of this code of ethics is to promote excellence in patient care by fostering responsibility and accountability among diagnostic medical sonographers. In doing so, the integrity of the profession of diagnostic medical sonography will be maintained.

OBJECTIVES

1. To create and encourage an environment where professional and ethical issues are discussed and addressed.
2. To help the individual diagnostic medical sonographer identify ethical issues.
3. To provide guidelines of individual diagnostic medical sonographers regarding ethical behavior.

PRINCIPLES

Principle I: To promote patient well-being, diagnostic medical sonographers shall:

- A. Provide information to the patient about role, credentials, and expertise.
- B. Provide information to the patient about the purpose of the sonography examination, procedure, or associated task within the scope of practice.
- C. Respond to the patient's questions, concerns, and expectations about the sonography examination, procedure, or associated task according to the scope of practice.
- D. Ensure patient safety when the patient is in the sonographer's care.
- E. Respect the patient's autonomy and the right to refuse the examination, procedure, or associated task.
- F. Recognize the patient's individuality and provide care in a non-judgmental, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner.
- G. Promote the patient's privacy, dignity, and well-being to ensure the highest level of patient care.
- H. Maintain confidentiality of acquired patient information per national patient privacy regulations and facility protocols and policies.

Principle II: To promote the highest level of competent practice, diagnostic medical sonographers shall:

- A. Obtain appropriate diagnostic medical sonography education and clinical skills to ensure competence.
- B. Achieve and maintain specialty-specific sonography certifications/credentials. Sonography certifications/credentials must be awarded by a national sonography certification/credentialing body that is accredited by a national organization that accredits certifications/credentialing bodies (i.e., Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE)/National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB)).
- C. Uphold professional standards by adhering to defined technical protocols and diagnostic criteria established by peer review and institutional research.
- D. Maintain continued competence through lifelong learning, which includes ongoing education and acquisition of specialty-specific credentials.
- E. Perform medically indicated sonography examinations, procedures, and associated tasks ordered by a licensed physician or their designated healthcare professional per the supervising physician, facility policies and protocols, or other requirements of the jurisdiction where performed.
- F. Protect patients and study subjects by adhering to oversight and approval of investigational procedures, including documented informed consent.
- G. Maintain professional accountability and standards by committing to self-regulation through adherence to professional conduct, self-assessment, and peer review, ensuring the highest patient care and safety standards.
- H. Acknowledge personal and legal limits, practice within the defined scope of practice, and assume responsibility for actions.
- I. Be accountable and participate in regular assessments of sonography protocols, equipment, examinations, procedures, and results. Note: This may be accomplished through facility accreditation.

Principle III: To promote professional integrity and public trust, diagnostic medical sonographers shall:

- A. Be truthful and promote appropriate communications with patients, colleagues, healthcare professionals, and students.
- B. Respect the rights of patients, colleagues, students, and yourself.
- C. Avoid conflicts of interest and situations that exploit others or misrepresent information.
- D. Accurately represent experience, education, and credentialing.
- E. Promote equitable access to care for the patient.
- F. Communicate and collaborate with fellow sonographers and healthcare

professionals to create an environment that promotes communication, respect, and ethical practice.

- G. Understand and adhere to ethical billing and coding practices, if applicable.
- H. Conduct all activities and agreements legally and transparently in compliance with federal and state laws and rules/regulations, as well as facility policies and protocols.
- I. Report deviations from the Code of Ethics per facility policies and protocols, and if necessary, to the appropriate credentialing organization for compliance evaluation and possible disciplinary action.