

Fifth Anniversary of SNMMI Professional Relations Fellowship

Jack Slosky, PhD, MBA, JJS Consulting, retired from Lantheus Medical Imaging; and Katherine Zukotynski, MD, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

A meeting marking the fifth anniversary of the SNMMI Professional Relations Fellowship (PRF) was held on June 22 at the SNMMI Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA, with current and past fellows in attendance, along with SNMMI leadership, the original creators of the program, and others interested in advancing this unique leadership training initiative. Created in 2013, the SNMMI PRF honors the memory of Ursula Mary Kocemba-Slosky, PhD, a scientist who believed in the power of working together toward a common goal. Through the PRF, fellows experience at first hand the spectrum of interactions between the nuclear medicine community and stakeholders, in an effort to develop an understanding of professional relations and successfully navigate the increasingly complex health care environment. The PRF focuses on the ways in which the public face of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging can enhance the specialty, through interactions with professional organizations, such as medical societies, industry/trade partners, and patient advocacy groups. Synergy among all those working in the field is key to future development.

Since 2013, 5 fellows have completed the PRF: Alexandru Bageac, MD, MBA (2014), Philip Koo, MD (2015), Katherine Zukotynski, MD (2016), David Douglas, MD, MPH (2017), and Nicole Nardecchia, MBA, CNMT (2018). Each of the fellows gained different insights, depending on his or her fellowship experience and home practice settings. Dr. Bageac explored the impact of the Affordable Care Act on individual organizations and intersocietal relationships, noting that “new sources of revenue must be identified as physician association membership decreases, physician time becomes less available, and physician allegiances change” (*J Nucl Med.* 2015;56:9N). Dr. Koo wrote that “the experience facilitated a head start on several new initiatives. One involves creation of a more formal working relationship between SNMMI and the American Society of Clinical Oncology” (*J Nucl Med.* 2016;57:10N). In a letter of appreciation to the fellowship committee, Dr. Zukotynski wrote: “I believe the SNMMI, as an organization and through its members, has the potential to lead the way in patient care, teaching, and research. The path will be easier, however, if we have a vision that includes buy-in and support from other stakeholders in our community.”

Dr. Douglas, having completed both the PRF and the SNMMI Government Relations Fellowship (Henkin Fellowship), noted: “Both fellowships allowed us to attend an SNMMI board meeting and visit Capitol Hill. The Government Relations Fellowship provided additional insight into

governmental organizations, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The PRF provided additional insight into other professional societies like the American College of Radiology, industry organizations like the Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals, Inc., and patient advocacy groups. Given the different emphasis for each fellowship, I would encourage fellows who have completed one fellowship to apply for the other.” Ms. Nardecchia, the first nuclear medicine technologist to be chosen as a PRF fellow, also found the experience rewarding and suggested that fellows be allowed to choose a specific project/topic that could be expanded even after the fellowship concludes.

At the anniversary reunion meeting in Anaheim, current and past fellows discussed the fellowship’s goals and achievements. Participants in the discussion also included: Elizabeth Dibble, MD, the new PRF fellow for 2019; Theresa Pinkham, MPA, executive director of the Education and Research Foundation for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (ERF); Frederic Fahey, ScD, who, in 2013, presented to the SNMMI Board of Directors a proposal for the PRF program; and Jack Slosky, PhD, MBA, who also proposed the SNMMI PRF in 2013 and subsequently endowed the program. The group identified several possible ways to enhance the value of the SNMMI PRF program:

- PRF fellows could create longer term projects that might extend beyond their fellowship service;
- A task force of interested PRF fellows (including former and current fellows) could be formed to develop recommendations for SNMMI leadership about additional ventures; and
- The Government Relations fellows and participants in the SNMMI Leadership Academy could be invited to join forces with the PRF fellows through such a task force, with the goal of assisting the SNMMI in developing new programs and services.

We wish to express thanks to Ms. Pinkham for the strong ERF support of the SNMMI PRF over the years, including support for the fifth anniversary reunion lunch meeting. Going forward and based on feedback from this meeting, we will convene a working group of PRF fellows, Government Relations fellows, and members of the Future Leaders Academy.