

SNMMI at NRC Commissioners' Meeting

On January 28 at a Commissioners' Meeting of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in Rockville, MD, SNMMI President Vasken Dilsizian, MD, and patient advocate Josh Mailman provided their perspectives on recent NRC staff initiatives related to medical uses of radioactive materials. The meeting was organized into 2 panels: 1 featuring NRC staff and 1 with stakeholders from the medical community who use or have patient perspectives on radioactive materials. Five presenters in each panel gave 8-minute presentations. For the NRC staff, these included an overview of the NRC program for medical uses of radioactive materials, the status of recent NRC staff activities, innovation opportunities and initiatives, efforts to prepare for review of emerging medical technologies, and regional perspectives on licensing and oversight of medical licensees. The external stakeholder panel addressed emerging issues in the national program for regulation of medical uses of radioactive materials, medical community suggestions about transformation/innovation opportunities, perspectives on recent NRC staff initiatives related to medical uses of radioactive materials, and patient suggestions for transformation/innovation and opportunities for the NRC to explore. These presentations were followed by an extended period in which NRC commissioners asked questions and followed up on the panelists' comments.

In his remarks, Dilsizian highlighted the importance of appropriate training and experience requirements for authorized users, addressed concerns about patient safety and patient release materials and guidelines after treatment with radioactive materials, and described potential barriers to patient access.



At the January 28 NRC Commissioners' Meeting, from left: Commissioner Jeff Baran; Commissioner Annie Caputo; American Society for Radiation Oncology President Thomas Eichler, MD; patient advocate Josh Mailman; NRC Chair Kristine L. Svinicki; SNMMI President Vasken Dilsizian, MD; and Commissioner David A. Wright.

Mailman was the only patient to sit on a panel. In his presentation, he offered views as an “end user” of medical radioactive materials. His focus was on treatment of neuroendocrine tumors, and he echoed Dilsizian's concerns about training and education requirements. A complete transcript of the meeting and panelists' slides are available at: <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/tr/2020/>.

*Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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Congressional Briefing: Diagnostic Imaging and Alzheimer Disease

SNMMI, the Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals, and the Medical Imaging Technology Alliance cohosted on January 29 a Capitol Hill congressional briefing on “A New Hope: Advancements in Diagnostic Imaging and Alzheimer's.” The briefing was an opportunity for physicians, patients, and industry representatives to talk with congressional representatives and staff about the growing importance of access to diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals—in particular, those for amyloid PET imaging for diagnosis, research, and treatment in Alzheimer disease (AD). Event speakers also addressed the need for fair payment for radiopharmaceuticals and passage of the Medicare Diagnostic Radiopharmaceutical Payment Equity Act of 2019 (HR 3772).

Speakers included AD patient and caregiver team Geri and Jim Taylor; William Klunk, MD, PhD, codirector of the University of Pittsburgh (PA) Alzheimer's Disease Research Center; and Gersham Dent, PhD, MBA, senior director of clinical imaging at Biogen (Cambridge, MA). Congressman Bobby Rush (D-IL), one of the original cosponsors of HR 3772, attended to voice his support for the bill.

Klunk, coinventor of the first amyloid imaging radiotracer, Pittsburgh compound-B, discussed the history of amyloid PET scans and their role in diagnosis and development of treatment plans. “Relative to past diagnostic approaches, amyloid PET scans allow us to track disease progression in a way that is clear and striking,” he said. “Put in simpler terms, these tools are shining a light on important dimensions of the disease that were previously unclear.”

Dent spoke about the importance of amyloid PET imaging in AD drug development. “Amyloid imaging is used to select the right patients for clinical trials,” he said. “It may be critical for patient identification when therapies enter the market, and patients can benefit from new therapies only if infrastructure issues are addressed and appropriate reimbursement is in place.”

Members of the nuclear medicine community who would like to express their support for ensuring patient access to lifesaving diagnostic radiopharmaceutical can go to: <https://snmmi.quorum.us/campaign/23260/> to write to their Congressional representatives.

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