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HCFA Sends PET to OHTA

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) officially sent the issue of Medicare reimbursement for certain positron emission tomography studies to the Office of Health Technology Assessment (OHTA) in early September. OHTA, which reviews medical procedures for efficacy, will conduct a review over the next 6 to 18 months that will include a review of the medical literature and consultations with other government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health, as well as a public comment period.

According to S. Steven Hotta, PhD, MD, medical officer with OHTA, a notice will appear in the *Federal Register* during October requesting comments and initiating the review. ■

1989 Scientific Exhibit Prizes

The Scientific Exhibits Subcommittee of the Scientific Program Committee awarded the following prizes during The Society of Nuclear Medicine 36th Annual Meeting last June.

FIRST PRIZE:
LABORATORY ROBOTICS: THE PREFERRED AUTOMATION METHOD FOR ROUTINE PET RADIOPHARMACEUTICALS. JW Brodack, MJ Welch. Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri.

SECOND PRIZE:
SM-153-EDTMP: EVOLUTION OF A BONE CANCER RADIOPHARMACEUTICAL. RA Holmes, DH Nelson, AR Ketring, LA Corwin, JC Lattimer, WA Volkert, M Farhangi. Nuclear Medicine, University of Missouri–Columbia and Harry S. Truman Veterans Hospital, Columbia, Missouri.

THIRD PRIZE:
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF AN AT-211 RADIOCHEMISTRY FACILITY. BL Engelstad, JP Huberty, MC Lagunas-Solar, DL White, S. Mirzadeh. University of California, San Francisco and Davis, California, and National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

(continued from page 1771)

1984 what we should have been saying all along:

> This Court rejects the opinion testimony of Dr. Karl Morgan and Dr. John Gofman because they both evidence an intellectually dishonest invention of arguments to protect their opinion. . .This is not a situation where the scientific community is equally divided between two respected schools of thought. It is a case where there is a small but very vocal group of scientists, including Dr. Morgan and Dr. Gofman, that holds views not considered credible by experts in the field. . .

Dr. Ernest Sternglass, much quoted by the media on radiation matters, has never published his claims about the effect of low-level radiation in a peer-reviewed journal. In an article in *Esquire* magazine published in 1969, Dr. Sternglass predicted that all children in the United States would die as a result of fallout from nuclear tests. Twenty years have passed and unfortunately for his credibility but fortunately for children, he was, and is, wrong. But his opinions, long since dismissed by knowledgeable scientists in his field, are still actively sought and quoted by the popular press. Until respected scientists, perhaps through their professional societies or through the National Academy of Science, identify the purveyors of misrepresentation, we have only ourselves to blame for fear, misunderstanding, and the rejection of technology.

We should be very jealous of who speaks for science, particularly in our age of rapidly expanding technology. A misinformed or uninformed public can stop anything even when it is clearly in society's benefit. How can the public be educated? I do not know the specifics, but of this I am certain: The public will remain uninformed and uneducated in science until the media professionals decide otherwise, until they stop quoting charlatans and quacks, and until respected scientists speak up.

Dixy Lee Ray, PhD
former Governor of the State of Washington
past Chairperson of the Atomic Energy Commission

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William R. Hendee Wins AAPM Award

The American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) has given their William D. Coolidge Award to William R. Hendee, PhD, vice president of science and technology at the American Medical Association (AMA). The Coolidge Award "recognizes a member of [AAPM] who has established a distinguished career in medical physics" and honors William Coolidge, who developed the hot cathode x-ray tube and significantly contributed to the development of lighting and x-ray technology.

The award was presented by Kenneth Wright, chairman of the AAPM's Awards and Honors Committee, and Jack S. Krohmer, PhD, professor of radiology at Wayne State University, during the AAPM Annual Meeting in Memphis, Tennessee in July.

Mr. Wright told *Newsline* that Dr. Hendee was selected because of his significant contributions to education and the science of medical physics, as well as to the national and international organizations in the field. "He's done a very good job in all the various activities he's been in over the years."

Referring to Dr. Hendee's present position with the AMA, Mr. Wright said, "He expresses the ideas of the physics community. . . he's very well suited to this because he expresses himself very well in both the written and spoken word."

Dr. Krohmer has had a long professional relationship with Dr. Hendee, which began in Boston at the 1960 Health Physics Society Meeting when Dr. Krohmer selected Dr. Hendee as the first recipient of the Gilbert Fellowship, a scholarship from the University of Texas. Dr. Krohmer told *Newsline*, "Over the past 29 years, I had no doubt that William Hendee would become a successful medical physicist."

Dr. Hendee told *Newsline* that the most rewarding aspects of his career have been his efforts in education. Dr. Hendee established and directed the graduate program in medical physics at the University of Colorado in Denver and established the Denver Collaborative Training Program in Radiologic Technology (which includes nuclear medicine) at that University, in addition to being involved in the graduate, post-doctoral, and residency training programs there. He said, "My continuing contact with the students in those programs is one of the most fulfilling things I can point to."

Dr. Hendee, a past president of The Society of Nuclear Medicine and the AAPM, has served in many capacities during his career in medical physics, including terms on the editorial boards of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* and *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*, as well as consulting positions with myriad regulatory and scientific organizations, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Council for Radiation Protection and Measurements, and the National Academy of Sciences.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Hendee expressed thanks to all previous recipients, saying, their names comprise ". . . a list of disciplined and dedicated scientists whose many contributions have brought medical physics to the status it enjoys today. It is an honor to be added to this list and a pleasure to acknowledge that in one way or the other all of these physicists have been my teachers. . . . I have learned a lot from them."

Dr. Hendee added, "The Coolidge Award means a great deal to me. . . . Medical physics has been a rich and immensely rewarding career for me. I'm not finished yet — far from it." ■

1990 DOE Nuclear Medicine Budget

Last month, President Bush signed into law Congress' conference agreement for fiscal year 1990 Department of Energy (DOE) appropriations. The congressional conferees did not increase the nuclear medicine research account above the original House and Senate budgets.

The nuclear medicine research budget for FY 1990 will be $37,645,000, which is incrementally higher than the $37,500,000 approved for last year. The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP) had urged a $5 million increase to $42.6 million (see *Newsline* July 1989, p. 1148). Two pork barrel projects — $10 million for the Biomedical Research Institute at Louisiana Medical Center for research into cardiovascular disease, molecular biology, and neurobiology (including positron emission tomography (PET) research), and $10 million for a neurosensory facility in basic and applied research at the Oregon Health Sciences University — remained in the budget as did $7.5 million for boron neutron capture therapy at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, although it had received negative peer review.

The conference report retains language specifying that DOE use "a substantial portion" of the additional funding provided for the nuclear medicine applications program, to support collaborative university-

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based centers working in high-field nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and PET; priority is to be given to universities already working in these fields through DOE support or through active involvement with DOE National Laboratories.

The conferees reduced the amount to be cut from the Alternating Gradient Synchrotron at Brookhaven from $10 million to $5 million. Originally, the Senate had proposed a $30 million reduction. SNM/ACNP opposed any reductions in this program.

R. Edward Coleman, MD, professor of radiology and director of nuclear medicine at Duke University Medical Center, chairman of the SNM Scientific Affairs and Research Committee, had testified before Congress on the nuclear medicine research budget. He told *Newsline*, "We are terribly disappointed with the outcome — with the very small increase we got for nuclear medicine research." He said Congress has been "short-sighted in their view of nuclear medicine," adding, "we will mount a better campaign next year to make our research better known to the budget committees. . .we will put more information into their hands so they can more fully understand nuclear medicine." ■

SNM/ACNP Key Contact Program

Now a joint effort of The Society of Nuclear Medicine and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP), the SNM/ACNP Key Contact Program is aimed at linking interested SNM and ACNP members with key representatives serving on congressional committees concerned with nuclear medicine issues.

Recently SNM/ACNP Key Contacts were successful in getting the House Energy and Commerce Committee to adopt language in the Medicare reconciliation bill that includes a provision exempting nuclear medicine specialists from the radiology relative value scale for one year, starting January, 1990. The Senate Finance Committee adopted a two year exemption to start January 1, 1990, but the full senate changed it to a one year exemption to start April 1, 1990. The final outcome was to be determined in House-Senate conferences in late October.

To become part of this effort, contact Valerie Fedio, SNM/ACNP Key Contact Coordinator at the SNM/ACNP Joint Washington Office at (202) 429-5120. ■

NRC Publishes Notice of SNM/ACNP Petition

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has published a notice of receipt of a Petition for Rulemaking regarding 10 CFR Parts 30, 33, and 35, which was filed jointly by The Society of Nuclear Medicine and The American College of Nuclear Physicians (see *Newsline* August 1989, p.1296).

The September 15 *Federal Register* notice indicates that the NRC is seeking public comment through December 14, 1989. Members are urged to support the petition in a letter that mentions:

- your practice and how the April, 1987 regulations adversely affect it.
- how NRC regulations are incompatible with Food and Drug Administration and State medicine and pharmacy regulations, which allow clinical use outside the package insert for approved drugs.
- how NRC regulations could potentially jeopardize public health and safety by restricting access to appropriate nuclear medicine procedures and exposing the public to higher radiation doses.
- how NRC should pursue a study of the radiobiologic effects of nuclear medicine misadministrations so they can understand that their efforts to impose more stringent regulations are unnecessary and not cost-effective in relation to the extremely low health risks of nuclear medicine studies.

Send comments to: Secretary of the Commission, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555, Attn: Docketing and Service Branch, Docket #PRM-35-9.

For a copy of the petition write to: Regulatory Publications Branch, Division of Freedom of Information and Publications Services, Office of Administration, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. ■

Amersham To Acquire Medi-Physics

Amersham International has negotiated with Hoffman-La Roche, Inc., to purchase Roche's Medi-Physics radiopharmaceutical manufacturing and radiopharmacy businesses. "Amersham has indicated that it intends to run Medi-Physics as an ongoing concern under the name of Amersham Medi-Physics with minimal changes to its current operating structure," wrote Medi-Physics President Frederick Fuest in a letter announcing the agreement to Medi-Physics employees. Closing of the deal is expected before the end of 1989, according to Mr. Fuest. ■