



Lynne Roy, CNMT,
Technologist
Section President

News from the Technologist Section

As we move closer to the new millennium, it will be essential that we examine our profession to assure that nuclear medicine technologists are well prepared to meet the many new challenges of the 21st century. We cannot assume that the skills or core competencies that were once essential for a successful career as a nuclear medicine technologist will remain the same. We cannot assume that the basic job description will remain the same. Therefore, it should not be surprising that much of the section's activities have centered on professional growth and development. In addition, the SNM Technologist Section has been extremely successful in promoting collaboration among many organizations within the allied health professions. This has enhanced and will continue to enhance the profession of nuclear medicine technology.

Continuing educational opportunities have been expanded to include a regional meeting, increased publications of *Uptake* and CE opportunities on the internet. Mandatory technologist licensing in all 50 states has been a prime objective of the Government Relations Committee. Data-gathering and analysis initiatives begun in collaboration with other professions will yield important information concerning our profession's demographics as well as help us to project future staffing needs. In conjunction with the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT), the SNM-TS may undertake a practice analysis to define the entry-level skills needed by technologists in order to meet the needs of health care providers.

The Health Professions Network, now in its sixth year, has been recognized by the Bureau of Health Professions as an important and influential resource concerning allied health issues. The first Coalition for Allied Health Leadership Conference, sponsored through a grant from the bureau, was completed in September 1998. Participants, who are emerging leaders in their respective professional societies, were taught leadership skills and lobbying techniques, and spent a day on Capitol Hill. The teams produced white papers that will be more fully developed during the second conference, scheduled for this spring. The SNM-TS was proud to have two of its members selected to participate.

Details on these, and other, SNM-TS efforts follow.

Health Professions Network

Another successful Health Professions Network (HPN) meeting took place October 3, 1998, in Portland, OR. The meeting was well attended, with 52 persons attending, representing more than 31 organizations. This was a very important and exciting meeting since most of the agenda was focused on strategic planning. HPN participants identified strategic needs and future action steps. At the next HPN meeting, March 4-6, 1999, in Denver, CO, participants continued the planning process, worked on identifying a vision and mission for HPN,

and heard from key legislative agencies, such as the Health Care Finance Agency.

The Bureau of Health Care Professions has renewed its support for developing allied health leaders. The second Coalition for Allied Health Leadership Conference will be held in the spring, with a wrap-up session scheduled in early fall. We are proud that again two of our members, Lenna Delitis-King and Sharon Lafferty, have been selected to participate.

Allied Health Data Collaborative Project

The Bureau of Health Professions contracted with the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP) to establish the Allied Health Data Collaborative, a partnership between data users and producers, of which SNM-TS is a member. In two project meetings, the ASAHP convened the data collaborative, which consists of 50 people from 43 institutions, to learn about existing data collection activities in allied health, and to identify gaps and develop recommendations for data needs. At the end of the contract year, the collaborative recommended continuing the project. The final report stated that supply-and-demand data needs in allied health were being met but recommended a longitudinal data approach to determine if students graduating from allied health schools were meeting the needs of their employers. The bureau contracted with ASAHP for another year to perform that study. As a member of the data collaborative, the SNM-TS will be involved in this project as well.

Alliance for Quality Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy

The SNM-TS and ASRT are actively collaborating in the promulgation of national licensure for the imaging sciences. They have formed the Alliance for Quality Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy as a coalition of health care organizations dedicated to the provision of safe, high-quality radiologic care. The alliance will pursue the establishment of federal minimum standards for radiologic personnel. During the next session of Congress, the Alliance plans to have a bill introduced that would add an enforcement mechanism to the Consumer Patient Radiation Health and Safety Act of 1981 (the Randolph Bill) which established licensure for the imaging professions on a voluntary basis. In addition, the Alliance will work at the state level to urge local legislators to draft licensure laws that adopt the standards provided by the federal government.

Medical Imaging and Radiation Oncology Data Alliance

The ASRT along with the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Radiologic Technology and the American Registry of Radiologic Technology have developed the concept of a masterfile database that tracks how the profession of radiologic sciences is evolving. These groups invited other organizations to determine if a broader effort is possi-

ble, with the SNM-TS attending that first meeting, along with the NMTCB and JRCNMT. The Medical Imaging and Radiation Oncology Data Alliance (MIRODA) was created in response so the participating organizations could pool their data and consider options for making the data available to others. The alliance's mission is to collect, analyze, report and disseminate data on medical imaging and radiation oncology professions.

ASRT Practice Analysis Research Project

The SNM-TS again has joined forces as equal partners with ASRT in a research project to determine the appropriate educational preparation for entry-level technologists (e.g., whether a baccalaureate degree is required). A practice analysis survey will be conducted to examine the tasks performed by newly certified nuclear medicine technologists, evaluate the knowledge required to perform those tasks competently, and determine where and how those tasks were learned. The information from the survey will be used to establish a baseline of skills and knowledge expected of nuclear medicine technologists entering clinical practice.

Summit on Radiologic Sciences and Sonography

The Summit on Radiologic Sciences and Sonography was formed in the late 1980s to deal with a severe technologist shortage that all imaging technology disciplines were facing. The summit convened a meeting during the 1998 RSNA Meeting to determine if indeed the field is again about to face a shortage or qualified technologists. The members decided that more data and information were needed and agreed to meet in a few months to discuss this further. As a result, there was a special session during the National Council meeting at the Society's Mid-Winter Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. Representatives from the ARRT, JRCNMT and NMTCB presented specific data concerning nuclear medicine technologists. These data did suggest that we are at the beginning of an employment cycle that will lead to a significant shortage of technologists within the next 3 -5 years.

ACNP Physicians Outreach Committee (POP)

The SNM-TS, represented by Cynthia Wharton, president-elect, and Nanci Burchell, chair of the Professional Enhancement and Public Relations (PE²) Committee, have been actively involved with the Physicians Outreach Committee (POP) Committee of ACNP. Within this program, physicians, technologists and industry work together to educate family physicians. Several other technologist members of the SNM-TS have helped Tom Verdon, MD, at state meetings and National Family Practice meetings. The SNM-TS is happy to be involved in this activity and sees it as a very positive promotion of the field of nuclear medicine.

Regional Meeting

The first Summer School for Technologists, a nationally sponsored meeting, was held August 8-9, 1998, in Las

Vegas, Nevada. The program's objectives were to offer the best of the educational offerings from the Annual Meeting in Toronto in a cost-effective manner to those technologists unable to attend the 1998 national meeting. The meeting was rated highly successful by all of the 262 participants. The program also did well financially: Net income was \$11,000. I would like to thank the Southern California Chapter, specifically Susan Gavel, for hosting this meeting.

The Second Annual Summer School is currently in the planning stages and will be hosted by the Southeastern Chapter in early August in Memphis, Tennessee.

Special Presentation at National Council Meeting

Neil Sampson, deputy associate administrator for health professions of HRSA was the keynote speaker at the National Council meeting. During the 1990s the business of health care has changed dramatically. In order to make informed decisions about the future of nuclear medicine technologists, it will be important to understand where we have been, where we are, and the future projections of the allied health professions from the federal government's perspective. Mr. Sampson's experience within the department of Health and Human Services provided this insight.

His presentation validated the fact that these current activities of the technologist section are not only appropriate but also essential to assuring the viability of our profession. Should

AM Session to Focus on Bioethics

A session on bioethics will be offered for the first time during the upcoming SNM Annual Meeting, June 7, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. An expert panel will discuss the topic "Bioethics in the Changing World of Managed Care." The session will comprise three talks:

"Is Managed Care an Oxymoron? Ethical Issues in the Changing Health Care System," by Jeffrey P. Kahn, PhD, MPH, director of the Bioethics Center of the University of Minnesota.

"Making It Up as We Go: Law and Policy in Managed Care," by Anne Mastroianni, JD, MPH, Washington University School of Law

"Managing To Care in a Managed Care Context: Challenges of Ethics and Moral Agency," by Susan Rubin, PhD, clinical ethicist consultant for the National Kaiser Permanente System and co-founder of The Ethical Practice.

Responding to the variety of ethical issues now confronting nuclear medicine professionals, the SNM Commission on Ethics, chaired by Theodore J. Stahl, MD, has developed the session to help attendees in forming an approach to the problems they now face.

you wish to learn more about the SNM-TS or wish to help in some of these endeavors, please email me at Roy@CSHS.org.