

# SNM Annual Meeting Preview

Fueled by the momentum of last year's well attended meeting in Toronto, the 1999 Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) Annual Meeting in Los Angeles promises to be just as successful. "We're expecting around 4,000 registrants, and so far the number of registrants is about even with the Toronto meeting," said Jane Day, SNM's associate director of meetings and exhibits. About 4,100 nuclear physicians attended the 1998 Annual Meeting compared to 3,600 attendees at the 1997 meeting held in San Antonio.

Los Angeles, on the other hand, did not draw many attendees when the meeting was last held there in 1992, barely a month after disturbances spurred by the Rodney King verdict. "Some registrants cancelled at the last minute," recalled Paul Murphy, PhD, general program chair. After visiting the meeting site recently, however, Murphy was impressed. "The meeting being held in a beautiful new addition to the convention center, which gives us more space and larger meeting rooms."

## Educational Opportunities

Extra seating capacity was definitely a high priority this year since a decision was made to expand the "Read with the Experts" sessions. These sessions enable participants to make interactive diagnoses on cases presented by the lecturers. "We had a large overflow crowd at last year's sessions, and we had a lot of feedback that people wanted more stations in each of the rooms for interacting with the experts," said Peter Conti, MD, PhD, scientific program chair. The program committees also decided to expand the number of sessions from 11 to 14.

This year's continuing education sessions and categorical seminars offer attendees approximately 33 credit hours of AMA Category 1 CME for physicians, ACPE for pharmacists and VOICE for technologists. The courses will cover updates for new regulations, including the expansion of Medicare coverage for PET; practical roles of SPECT and PET in a variety of disease entities such as myocardial perfusion, brain perfusion, cancer detection and staging; and techniques involving new instrumentation and radiopharmaceuticals.

## Scientific Program

Slightly more than 1400 abstracts have been accepted for presentation in either the oral or poster



The 1999 Annual Meeting will take place in the newly expanded LA Convention Center.

sessions. The electronic submission of abstracts was expanded from last year's trial run and was offered to all researchers. About 80% to 90% of researchers emailed their abstracts instead of mailing in a disk, according to Conti. "We wanted to increase convenience while at the same time we're trying to standardize the format of the abstracts that appear in the abstract book," Conti said. "We encountered a few computer bugs, most of which were relatively minor. We expect that the problems will be worked out for next year."

The Public Relations Committee identified 34 newsworthy abstracts whose findings may interest the public at large. Of these abstracts, 21 were related to the use of PET for the diagnosis or staging of various cancers including malignant melanoma, head and neck cancer, cervical cancer, esophageal carcinoma, colorectal cancer, lymphoma, gastric cancer, and recurrent ovarian cancer. Several studies discussed the value of whole body FDG-PET for the clinical management of cancer patients, while others provided cost-effectiveness analysis. Some of these studies will be publicized through press conferences held in conjunction with the meeting.

## Plenary Session

The Annual Meeting will open with its traditional Plenary Session at which the third annual Henry N. Wagner, Jr., Scientific Lecture will be given by Michael Phelps, PhD, chairman of the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine. Phelps, who contributed to the invention of PET 25 years ago, will look back on the advances in PET to mark its silver

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## Computer and Instrumentation Council Offers Mid-Winter Symposium

During the Society's recent Mid-Winter Meeting in Fort Lauderdale, FL, the SNM Computer and Instrumentation Council sponsored a Mid-Winter Symposium entitled "Nuclear Medicine in the 21st Century," on February 8 and 9. The symposium was organized by Frederic H. Fahey, D.Sc., of Wake Forest University, and Simon R. Cherry, Ph.D., of the Crump Institute of Biologic Imaging at UCLA. The program comprised 14 presentations in which the speakers were asked to review the current state of nuclear medicine technology and to speculate as to where they felt the field may be going in the next 5 to 10 years. The presentations covered such diverse topics as the history of nuclear medicine imaging, advances in SPECT and PET instrumentation and radiopharmaceutical development, as well as future clinical applications of nuclear medicine in the brain and heart and in oncology. The future roles of small animal imaging, 3D PET, iterative reconstruction, and diagnosis-driven data-processing as well as the potential for nuclear imaging of gene expression were also presented. There was a lively debate on whether dedicated or hybrid SPECT/PET systems will be used in the future and a panel discussion as to the nature of nuclear medicine instrumentation in the year 2010. H. William Strauss, M.D., delivered the

keynote luncheon presentation on his vision of "The Future of Nuclear Medicine." The provocative nature of the symposium, the wide range of topics, the consistently high quality of the presentations and the relaxed atmosphere led to a number of stimulating discussions among the presenters and the audience. The Computer and Instrumentation Council has sponsored the Mid-Winter Symposium for more than 15 years and is currently planning the program for next year's meeting in Long Beach, CA.

## Change in ABNM Exam Date

Since the American Board of Nuclear Medicine annual certification examination falls on a religious holiday in 1999, the Board has rescheduled the examination. It will be given one week later, on Saturday, September 18, 1999. The examination location and examination procedures are otherwise unchanged.

## SNM Members Invited To Observe AM Committee Meetings

SNM leadership wishes to remind members that most Society committee sessions at the Annual Meeting welcome observers. Listening in on SNM committee sessions, leaders point out, is the best way to learn what specific bodies do and whether participation on a committee

might be of interest to new members and younger members of the profession. Society leadership is always looking for potential committee members who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and willing to contribute.

Committee sessions at this year's Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 5, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A schedule listing specific times and meeting rooms for all committees will appear on the SNM web site ([www.snm.org](http://www.snm.org)) within the "Meetings" section.

## Education and Research Foundation Donates Funds

The SNM Education and Research Foundation (ERF) has recently funded two important Society endeavors. In the first, the foundation donated \$10,300 to defer SNM membership fees in the Academy for Radiologic Research (ARR). "SNM's membership in ARR is potentially the most powerful use of ERF funds at this time because for a relatively small investment, ERF is placing nuclear medicine on the map as a major player in the quest for an imaging sciences institute at NIH," said Naomi Alazraki, MD, the Society's representative to ARR.

The second donation was to the SNM Awards Committee and involved two awards, each for \$500. One of the awards is to be given to an Annual Meeting presentation by a resident and the other is to be given to a technologist presentation.

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anniversary. The Plenary Session will be immediately followed in the same room by the business meeting, a change that was instituted to encourage a greater attendance among the membership.

Although Los Angeles is traditionally seen as a city more conducive to dri-

ving than walking, Murphy said the paths between the meeting sites and hotels are fairly easy to traverse by foot. A free shuttle bus service will also be available to ferry attendees from place to place. In addition to the welcome reception and the SNM-TS party (with a "come-dressed-as-your-favorite-movie-star" theme), a variety of social and recre-

ational opportunities are available to attendees looking for a diversion from the scientific and educational activities.

As in previous years, the Annual Meeting will conclude—for the 22nd year—with the overview and highlights of the scientific research presentations by Henry N. Wagner, Jr., MD.

—Deborah Kotz