



SNM TS Focus Remains On Fundamental Goals

Nuclear medicine technology is at a pivotal point, and SNM TS leaders will need to discuss what educational changes are required to meet the needs of the future.

For 35 years, the SNM Technologist Section has continued to promote the continued development and improvement of the art and science of nuclear medicine technology. I am privileged and honored to lead SNM TS, especially at a time when there is so much change and excitement in the nuclear medicine technologist (NMT) profession.

My focus for the next year will be on our strategic long-range/fundamental goals—education, advocacy, information resource, outreach, and organization—ensuring that SNM TS remains the premier source of information for nuclear medicine technology.

Let's Be Advocates

There has been much excitement and expansion in nuclear medicine scanning techniques because of advances in computer applications and development. Hybrid (multimodality) units are becoming more and more popular. Although these advances are revolutionizing medical imaging and therapy, they are also creating a host of practice issues. These practice issues occur most commonly in states with inadequate standards or inadequate regulations in place. For this reason, we must press to get the Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence (CARE) bill enacted. This bill will address numerous practice issues in medical imaging and radiation.

Designed to establish federal education and credentialing standards for personnel who deliver radiation therapy treatments and perform medical imaging procedures (except diagnostic medical sonography), the CARE bill will help reduce the risk of medical errors associated with misdiagnosis or the misadministration of radiation. Currently, only 24 states license or regulate nuclear medicine technologists; 29 states license or regulate radiation therapists; and 37 states license or regulate radiographers. This means that in those states without mini-

mum education or credentialing standards through legislation or regulation, medical imaging and radiation therapy personnel are allowed to perform medical imaging and therapeutic procedures without obtaining specific education or credentials. In these states, it is common to have noncertified or nonregistered personnel performing these procedures. This disparity is alarming.

In addition, PET has finally found its place in imaging, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has recognized PET's value as it relates to neurology, cardiology, and oncology. The big news in PET reimbursement last year was CMS's approval of PET to diagnose Alzheimer's disease and the expansion of the clinical application of PET to most cancers. Reimbursement seems to have been established, and even though certain insurance carriers may require preauthorization, these procedures are consistently being approved. We must continue to work with CMS to ensure that reimbursement rates remain fair.

Educational Standards

Our profession will continue to grow; government economists expect jobs for NMTs to increase faster than the average for all occupations over the next 5–7 years. We want NMT professionals to look to SNM TS as the primary educational resource, so we must continue our strong tradition of excellence in education with high-quality programs on the latest fusion technologies.

CT in fusion imaging is pushing educators to incorporate this modality into program curricula. We find that the profession is



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Referral and patient outreach are important, and we need to concentrate on the economics of nuclear medicine/molecular imaging. One way to do this is for SNM to collaborate closely with the American College of Nuclear Physicians, an organization created to foster the highest standards in nuclear medicine consultation and service to referring physicians, hospitals, and the public and to advance the science of nuclear medicine through improvement of the socioeconomic aspects of the practice of nuclear medicine. An active and viable college can only benefit our profession through essential educational, mentoring, and government relations programs.

When it comes to facing changes, SNM's leaders will rely increasingly on strategic advice from the society's

councils, centers, and committees. From past presidents to new trainees, everyone has a stake in the future of our profession and our society—and everyone can, and should, contribute. By utilizing our broad knowledge bank, your board of directors can remain up to date and well educated, serving you more efficiently. As an SNM member, your name is forever linked to the pioneers who developed the field of nuclear medicine—from Becquerel and the Curies to de Hevesy, Seaborg, Cassen, and Yalow—and to the great advancements yet to come. Together, we can face the challenges of the future because we will be prepared.

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challenged by how to educate working NMTs in CT and by how to ensure that new NMT graduates are competent enough in CT to immediately assume the role of fusion technologist. SNMSTS will need to look at the current offerings of NMT educational programs and make recommendations about these issues. Nuclear medicine technology is at a pivotal point, and SNMSTS leaders will need to discuss what educational changes are required to meet the needs of the future. We must always look ahead and think long and hard about current educational requirements to see if they are adequate to take NMTs through the next 5 or 10 years and beyond.

Provide Information

Through nuclear medicine we can image virtually every body organ system down to the molecular level, increase our knowledge of how the body works, and improve our understanding of diseases and their treatment. Nuclear medicine answers medical questions for all individuals, from children to the elderly, from injury to cancer, and from inherited to acquired metabolic diseases.

We must continue to inform the public about PET and its impact on patient care.

Outreach to Industry

While NMTs work closely with doctors, patients, and other members of the health care team, I hope SNMSTS can work with industry vendors and provide input for designing new equipment across modalities.

SNMSTS Organization

The SNMSTS governance reorganization is in place. Our changes in committee structure, the National Council of Representatives, and Executive Board responsibilities have positioned us to accomplish our long-term strategic goals. Over the next year, I would like to see an increase in the involvement and participation of the existing membership. With your help, I'd like to be a leader who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

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