

Addressing the Short Term While Planning for the Long Term

It is both an honor and a privilege to step into the role as president of SNM, and I am grateful for the trust that the society's members have placed in me to continue to represent their needs and concerns among domestic governmental agencies, international organizations, and other stakeholders. SNM is poised to further its strategic mission by advancing molecular imaging and therapy. At the same time, we as a community face several immediate challenges, including a radioisotope shortage, decreased reimbursement, a job shortage, and public concerns over radiation exposure. The role of molecular imaging in health care continues to expand as more physicians—and patients—recognize the value of molecular imaging for the diagnosis, staging, and restaging of tumors for the treatment of cancer and common cardiac conditions. As a leading medical organization, we have an opportunity to present a collective and unified voice to advocate for our concerns—a charge that I am prepared to lead as I take the helm for the next year.

As president, I will continue to support SNM's long-term initiatives, which are critical to the future of our field. These initiatives include: (1) addressing regulatory and reimbursement challenges to bringing new biomarkers to the bedside by expanding collaborative efforts with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, industry, and professional organizations; (2) providing high-quality educational materials and guidelines in collaboration with other societies to members and referring physicians; and (3) facilitating national and international outreach and collaboration to improve patient care.

New technologies hold great promise for contributing to the personalized medicine revolution through advanced imaging tools, with enormous potential for improving patient care and outcomes. However, I also realize the importance of focusing on the most pressing needs of our members in the current economic landscape—we must address the short term and plan for the long term to pave the way for future growth. I plan to focus on reimbursement, advocating for a domestic radioisotope supply, and addressing economic concerns, in addition to supporting SNM's long-term initiatives in collaboration with the incoming executive committee. Health care reform will continue to bring quality and access to the forefront and drive awareness of quality of care. Laboratory accreditation and adherence to evidence-based practice guidelines and appropriate use criteria will become increasingly important as conditions for reimbursement—and these are areas in which SNM has been actively working to ensure that our members lead the field.

Comparative effectiveness studies, well-designed clinical trials, and clinical acceptance of hybrid imaging procedures such as PET/CT and SPECT/CT, especially with new tracers, are necessary for a sound scientific foundation. Faced with decreasing reimbursement, we as members of the nuclear medicine and molecular imaging community are called to continually remind decision makers that not only is molecular imaging an essential component of the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders, it can decrease the cost of health care by guiding physicians to the most appropriate therapies and sparing patients from unnecessary treatment, especially unnecessary invasive procedures. This can be achieved by setting standards for molecular imaging and through nuclear medicine practice guidelines.

One of my additional goals during my presidency is to prioritize programs and simplify the organizational infrastructure of SNM's governance. A reliable infrastructure should be in place that can support SNM's programs to optimize services and communication with the membership. I want to be sure the lines of communication are open so that members are heard. Please take advantage of the social networking sites where SNM has a presence—such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn—to participate in the conversation. In the meantime, I plan to actively work on initiatives that will keep the job market open and increase reimbursement. As for the radioisotope shortage that continues to plague the community, we will keep advocating for the passage of H.R. 3276 (the American Medical Isotopes Production Act of 2010) to establish a domestic source of radioisotopes. A reliable supply of radioisotopes remains one of our most critical priorities.

I want to thank the board members and all volunteers for their continued commitment to our organization. I especially thank Michael M. Graham, PhD, MD, for his exceptional service as president, and I look forward to carrying on his many initiatives to ensure SNM's success.



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