

A Celebration of 60 Years

In 2014, the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) will celebrate its 60th anniversary. The organization was formed in 1954 and has grown exponentially since 12 like-minded scientists and physicians joined in Spokane, WA, to discuss creating a society to meet their needs. A total of \$100 was collected among the group, and the Society of Nuclear Medicine was formed.

I just turned 60 myself, and it's amazing to think how fast time flies. Wasn't it only yesterday that I was taking college courses, personal computers were new technology, and cell phones and the Internet were technology dreams? The same thing holds true for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. When the society was first started, professionals used only analog imaging, with equipment tapping dots on paper to export information. Today, our knowledge and ability has grown by leaps and bounds, allowing us to use advanced 3D digital imaging to care for our patients and then send these images anywhere in the world.

The breadth of radiopharmaceuticals that are now used by nuclear medicine and molecular imaging professionals has also helped to grow our field. Since the formation of the society, many new radiopharmaceuticals have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, including ^{133}Xe , $^{99\text{m}}\text{Tc}$ -labeled compounds, ^{201}Tl , myocardial perfusion agents, radiopharmaceuticals tagged to antibodies, ^{18}F -FDG, the new ^{18}F -labeled amyloid imaging agents, and therapy agents like ^{223}Ra . Our society members were instrumental in bringing these new agents to approval, and nuclear medicine would not have continued to grow without these new tracers and therapies.

As technology advanced for both modalities and radiopharmaceuticals, we saw a shift in the procedures we were able to perform. We moved from primarily endocrine studies to studies that cover every organ system. New therapies have also been developed to broaden the scope of nuclear medicine, beyond the use of radioactive iodine to treat benign and malignant thyroid disorders.

Not only has the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging grown, but our society has also expanded and evolved to meet the needs of its members. Although we started out with only 12 members, after 60 years SNMMI now stands at more than 18,000 members.

The Journal of Nuclear Medicine, established by the society in 1960, now ranks as one of the top medical imaging journals. The society held its 60th Annual Meeting in 2013, having grown from 109 attendees at the 1954 meeting to more than 5,700 attendees this past year. Providing education has always been a key focus of the society. The continuing education opportunities at our annual meetings, as well as educational efforts separate from organized meetings, have continued to grow to encompass advances in the field as well as new methods of delivery. The society also recognized that state and federal government regulations and legislation were playing an increasing role in the ways in which our specialty was practiced. We have concentrated resources to respond to these outside regulators and better communicate with other imaging organizations to ensure that nuclear medicine and molecular imaging can continue to grow.

More recently, SNMMI expanded to incorporate molecular imaging into its mission. Focusing on all aspects of functional imaging has increased the effectiveness of the society and provided an opportunity for continued growth. Incorporating molecular imaging into our strategic plan has also allowed the society to take a more in-depth role in helping to facilitate translational research and clinical trials.

I look forward to celebrating SNMMI's 60th anniversary throughout 2014. We have accomplished much throughout the past 60 years—both in the field and within the society. I would like to thank all of the volunteers who have helped to make SNMMI what it is today. SNMMI's past presidents, leadership, and members should be proud of their foresight and dedication to improving the field, which have led us to where we are today. Let's hope we can continue these successes in the next 60 years and beyond.



Gary Dillehay, MD

Gary Dillehay, MD
SNMMI President