

SNMMI Final Response to ABNM/ABR Task Force Proposal

SNMMI President Hossein Jadvar, MD, PhD, MPH, MBA, on September 30 communicated the SNMMI Board of Directors' final response to the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM)/American Board of Radiology (ABR) Task Force, declining its proposal to amend nuclear medicine training and to change the current certification infrastructure. In an April 3 statement, the ABNM/ABR group had proposed: (1) implementing a single combined 2 + 3 nuclear medicine/diagnostic radiology (NM/DR) training program resulting in a new primary NM/DR certificate; and (2) eliminating the current Nuclear Radiology fellowship programs, dissolving ABNM as an independent certifying board, and replacing it with a new NM/DR specialty under the ABR umbrella. SNMMI first responded to this statement on June 4 with a letter to the executive directors of the ABNM and ABR, inviting further conversation and offering to facilitate discussions and serve as a conduit to nuclear medicine stakeholders.

From June through September, SNMMI solicited input from a wide range of sources in the nuclear medicine community, met with representatives of the ABNM and ABR, and hosted and participated in discussions with groups within the society and with the ABNM Board of Directors. Dr. Jadvar's September 30 letter to the executive directors of the ABNM and ABR reported that the SNMMI Board of Directors had voted unanimously that SNMMI could not support the principles of the proposal as they had been presented. Results from SNMMI and SNMMI-TS member surveys were included with the final letter and are available at <http://www.snmmi.org/NewsPublications/NewsDetail.aspx?ItemNumber=14759>. The body of the letter from Dr. Jadvar is reproduced in its entirety here:

"On behalf of SNMMI, I would like to thank the ABR-ABNM for allowing SNMMI to weigh in on the proposal that was sent to us on April 3, 2015. As you know the SNMMI BoD discussed this proposal during our Annual Meeting in June 2015 in Baltimore, MD, and an initial response letter was sent to the Task Force on June 3, 2015, signed by then SNMMI President, Dr. Peter Herscovitch. We quickly established a web portal survey for both the SNMMI and the SNMMI-TS, and the proposal was presented along with our response letter to the SNMMI House of Delegates during the Annual Meeting. Moreover, the entire SNMMI leadership met with ABNM representatives (George Segall, Janis O'Malley, Louise Thomson) and the ABR representative (Milton Guiberteau) during the ACR-ISC meeting in Tabernash, CO, on July 24, 2015, after receiving a letter from Louise Thomson and the FAQ sheet dated July 17, 2015. Since then, our HOD has had two

additional conference calls on this topic on August 17 and September 9, 2015. The SNMMI BoD also had conference calls on August 24 and September 18, 2015, with the latter as a joint call with the ABNM BoD. The minutes of these calls as well as the results of the SNMMI and SNMMI-TS surveys were submitted to the Task Force when they became available.

Most recently, the SNMMI BoD and SNMMI-TS BoD met on September 26-27, 2015, in Leesburg, VA, and discussed all the information (including the preliminary ABNM-ABMS survey results), to provide this final response letter as requested, to be submitted prior to the ABR Board meeting scheduled for October 24-27, 2015. There was a thoughtful discussion on this topic and many worthwhile comments were recorded. **The SNMMI BoD voted unanimously that SNMMI could not support the principles of the proposal as they were presented.** A summary of both the SNMMI and SNMMI-TS surveys are provided along with this letter for your records.

In summary, the majority of our membership, whether from the United States or from the international community, were against the proposal. The main concerns were dissolution of the ABNM (and hence loss of primary specialty status) and the notion of a single training pathway (despite subsequent mention of the possibility of multiple entry pathways that remain otherwise undefined), which prohibited non-imaging specialists from entering nuclear medicine training. Also the fact that diagnostic radiology trainees with 4-month training would still be able to practice the full scope of nuclear medicine was considered objectionable, since in essence this would have established two parallel but very different pathways for nuclear medicine clinical practice.

The SNMMI BoD, however, acknowledged wholeheartedly the importance of the underlying reasons for the proposal related to the current challenges facing nuclear medicine training and the need for this training to assure value-based quality nuclear medicine practice. To that end, the SNMMI is immediately forming a Task Force to assess the landscape and work with all relevant stakeholders (including but not limited to ABR, ABNM, ACNM, SCARD, RRCs, ACR, RSNA) to advise the SNMMI on how to address this important challenge. We will soon reach out to these entities and hope to establish a firm and rigorous dialogue to move forward, leveraging the valuable input from all these stakeholders. The goal, as I mentioned before, is to form a partnership to come up with one or more pathways that optimize high quality value-driven practice of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging."