

Expanding Outreach in the Era of Integrated, Collaborative Health Care

Virginia Pappas, CAE, SNMMI CEO

Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging are playing an ever-increasing health care role—touching virtually every medical discipline. Collaboration is key in providing quality care, and SNMMI is expanding its outreach and educational efforts by partnering with referring-physician societies and patient advocacy groups.

The SNMMI Outreach Program currently includes working groups for brain imaging, targeted radioisotope therapy, and the appropriate use criteria (AUC) currently under development, as well as the Patient Advocacy Advisory Board. We are building on strong relationships already established with other societies and patient groups and are now working at the leadership level with each organization to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines ways in which we can collaborate for the benefit of organizations and their members.

SNMMI has long worked closely with the American Society of Clinical Oncology, for example, presenting joint sessions at meetings and collaborating on AUC development. We have now signed an official MOU that states that imaging is integral to cancer care and that we need to work together closely. This partnership serves as a model for working with other organizations. SNMMI also has a strong relationship with the Alzheimer's Association. The society is actively educating physicians about amyloid imaging. This has been accomplished through road shows at universities that have SNMMI members, providing free events at which health care providers can meet with experts and review cases. We have also collaborated on the IDEAS study, which will assess the usefulness of PET brain scans in diagnosing and managing treatment of individuals with symptoms of cognitive impairment.

For patient advocacy groups, outreach involves educational materials, including fact sheets and webinars, as well as education sessions at conferences and speakers provided

at their meetings. Patient perspectives and concerns are also brought back to physicians.

At the 2017 Mid-Winter Meeting, the SNMMI board began reviewing the 4 AUC nearing completion: Hepatobiliary Scintigraphy in Abdominal Pain, Bone Scintigraphy in Prostate and Breast Cancer, Ventilation/Perfusion (V/Q) Imaging in Pulmonary Embolism, and PET/CT Restaging of Malignant Disease. Planning is underway to disseminate these along with educational materials to referring physicians through their representative organizations. The development of these criteria has been a collaborative effort, and the educational outreach will be as well. It is exciting to see the new AUC becoming part of the evidence-based library guiding the practice of nuclear medicine. With 6 more currently in development, SNMMI is working to expand the AUC library over time. Members of the AUC workgroups volunteer their time and expertise to ensure the highest standards of quality and evidence-based practice. I speak for all in the society in saying, "Thank you!"

In all of these collaborative efforts, we are raising awareness of the role of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in diagnosing conditions, managing treatment, and—increasingly—providing therapy. Following the FDA's approval of ¹⁷⁷Lu-DOTATATE, a new peptide receptor radionuclide therapy that targets neuroendocrine carcinoid tumors with a radiolabeled somatostatin analog peptide, SNMMI's targeted radioisotope therapy working group will conduct outreach to referring physicians. In addition, the Therapy Center of Excellence is planning an educational session on Lutathera for the 2017 SNMMI Annual Meeting in Denver, CO.

SNMMI is widening collaboration and outreach to mirror the interdisciplinary nature of modern health care. Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging are increasingly integral to quality, patient-centered care, and the society is focused on raising understanding of their critical role.