

## TECHNOLOGIST SECTION COMPLETES FIRST SURVEY ON IMPACT OF DRGs

**T**he Technologist Section of The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) has completed its first survey on the impact of the prospective payment system (PPS) on nuclear medicine.

During the semi-annual meeting of the National Council (composed of Section officers, committee chairpersons, and representatives of each SNM chapter) on March 1, 1986, in West Palm Beach, FL, data were presented from about 1,800 respondents to the questionnaire mailed last year.

Since the United States government implemented its diagnosis-related group (DRG) system for Medicare reimbursement in 1983, 65% of the respondents reported a decrease in the volume of nuclear medicine inpatient services, whereas 9% reported an increase, and 26% reported no change. For outpatient services, 13% reported a decrease, 58% reported an increase, and 29% reported no change.

With respect to the "willingness of physicians to refer patients for nuclear medicine studies," 11% of the respondents noted an increase, 24% observed a decrease, and 57% said no change. The demand by hospital administrators for productivity standards increased for 49% of the respondents, decreased for 2%, and remained unchanged for 3%, reported Thomas W. Crucitti, CNMT, chairman of the Government Relations Committee.

[A full report on the results of this survey will be published in a future issue of the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*, and a follow-up survey was discussed.]

So far, 202 of the 218 required congressional cosponsors have agreed to

support the bill (H.J.197) to legislate "National Nuclear Medicine Week," introduced last year by Congressman James H. Scheuer (D-NY).

### National Nuclear Medicine Week

James J. Wirrell, CNMT, president of the Technologist Section, reported that Senator Dan Quayle (R-IN), who is active in health care legislation, has agreed to introduce an identical bill. The Senate bill requires 25 cosponsors (13 Republicans and 12 Democrats), and the Section is hoping that President Ronald Reagan will sign the bill publicly during the SNM 33rd Annual Meeting this June in Washington, DC.

The idea for the commemorative week originated in the Technologist Section, and has evolved into a unified effort with the SNM and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP).

Since the National Council called for the elimination of on-the-job (OJT) training as a route to certification (see *Newsline*, Mar. 1985, pp. 221-222), the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) has abolished only part of the OJT criteria (high school diploma plus six years of clinical experience) for taking the exam. The National Council directed Mr. Wirrell to write a letter to the NMTCB urging that the remaining OJT criteria also be eliminated.

The SNM Board of Trustees lifted the restrictions on the income to the Technologist Section from the SNM Annual Meeting exhibit revenue. The Section had received \$.50 per square foot of exhibit space on the condition that the Section offer a continuing education program during the SNM Winter Meeting.

That provision was eliminated, and the Section's Task Force on the Winter Meeting, chaired by Dorothy Duffy Price, CNMT, suggested alternatives for the mid-year National Council and committee meetings, such as holding them in conjunction with a chapter meeting. The task force found that the attendance for the Winter Meeting continuing education program was declining due to lack of travel funds for technologists and scheduling conflicts with chapter meetings.

The Technologist Section will continue to offer continuing education courses during the SNM Annual Meeting held in June.

Karen Blondeau, CNMT, chairwoman of the Section's Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the survey of educators regarding the impact of nonradionuclide assays and central radiopharmacies on technologist training programs is completed, and will be published in the next Academic Affairs Committee Newsletter. In addition, an educators' session will be held at the SNM Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 22, and the Student Day Program will run on Monday, June 23.

Jacqueline A. Bridges, chairwoman of the Socio-Economic Affairs Committee, presented an informational report on the Radiology Workload Measurement Study, a project of the American Hospital Radiology Administrators and the Center for Cost-Effectiveness. Ms. Bridges recommended that the Technologist Section participate in the multi-hospital survey, designed to determine average technologist time per exam for 39 procedures, including one in nuclear medicine (bone scan). ■