

Board of Trustees Discusses SNM Reorganization and Other Action Items

SNM TAKES FIRST STEP IN ENHANCING REPRESENTATION OF NON-U.S. MEMBERS

The Society of Nuclear Medicine's (SNM) Board of Trustees voiced its approval in principle for the formation of the "SNM in Canada" to address scientific, educational, or sociopolitical issues in nuclear medicine specifically relevant to Canadian members.

According to Albert A. Driedger, MD, PhD, FRCP(C), FACP, chairman of the SNM Ad Hoc Committee on Canadian Membership, "The matter of how the SNM serves its members outside the United States has often been a cause for concern. Looking at the Board of Trustees agenda, one asks how much of it is really the meat of international science and how much is watching the neighbors doing their housekeeping and sorting out domestic affairs."

The committee studied the possible realignment of the binational SNM chapters along the U.S.-Canadian border, but found that the chapter members preferred to remain a binational group. The committee recommended that a portion of the annual dues paid by Canadian SNM members be used for an operating fund for the SNM in Canada.

B. Leonard Holman, MD, secretary of the SNM and chairman of the Chapter Presidents Committee, fully endorsed the proposal. By forming the SNM in Canada, "the Society can maintain its international representation and more fully meet the needs of the Canadians, while also creating a model for how we might begin to enhance our service to SNM members in European, Asian, and other countries who at some point may express interest in more

representation within the Society," said Dr. Holman, who is also director of the Department of Clinical Nuclear Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

The Board of Trustees referred the proposal to the By-Laws and Finance Committees during its March 3, 1986, meeting in West Palm Beach, FL.

Re-evaluation of SNM Mission

Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD, president of the SNM, presented the Board with an in-depth analysis of the Society's mission and suggestions for restructuring (see *Newsline*, April 1986, p. 441).

"There is a need to go further than our scientific and educational mission," said Dr. Goldsmith, who explained that the SNM needs to become more proactive in public policy matters where "it's clear that many members look to the SNM for representation," and in generating revenue.

Michael L. Goris, MD, PhD, professor of radiology in the Division of Nuclear Medicine at Stanford University, and David V. Becker, MD, director of the Nuclear Medicine Division at New York Hospital, expressed serious reservations about the SNM pursuing sources of non-dues income because they said they foresee the Society becoming more of a business than a scientific organization.

On the other hand, Howard J. Dworkin, MD, president-elect of the SNM, said, "There is no question that our primary goal is education and the advancement of science in nuclear medicine. "Revenue from our two

major sources (meetings and publications) is declining, however, and will continue to decline. Unless the Society responds in a responsible manner to provide necessary income to carry out our educational and scientific mission, we will fail as a society."

Henry N. Wellman, MD, director of the Nuclear Medicine Department at the Indiana University School of Medicine, urged the Board to take this opportunity to examine how well the SNM fulfills its educational and scientific mission. "I think, for example, that we have done a marvelous job of supporting education for technologists, but we need significant improvement in the area of medical student education," he said.

The plan for restructuring the SNM originated in the Executive Committee's planning meeting last fall (see *Newsline*, Dec. 1985, p. 1362). Dr. Goldsmith, who is also director of the Department of Physics—Nuclear Medicine at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, has invited all SNM members to contact him before the Annual Meeting this June to express their opinions on the Society's mission and structure.

Introduced by the Ad Hoc Committee on Council Coordination, a proposal was adopted by the Board to give due consideration to adequate representation for SNM councils and nuclear medicine scientists during the restructuring process.

This proposal followed the defeat of an earlier resolution, from the Radiopharmaceutical Science Council, to add the presidents of each council to the Nominating Commit-

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tee. Alan R. Fritzberg, PhD, president of the Radiopharmaceutical Science Council, explained that the proposal was designed to create more balance between physicians and scientists among elected representatives.

Michael J. Welch, PhD, chairman of the Nominating Committee, however, noted that mechanisms are already in place for having more scientist candidates on the election ballot.

Licensing of Cardiologists

Regarding the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) education and training requirements for physicians using radionuclides, the Board reaffirmed its position that "a well-defined training program of four months be required for licensing physicians wishing to limit their nuclear medicine practice to a single organ, and that the current requirement for a six-month training program be maintained for all others."

The Board came to this decision last year in response to the American College of Cardiology's NRC petition for reduced training requirements (see *Newsline*, March 1985, pp. 221-223; June 1985, pp. 557-558). In December 1985, the NRC staff sent a draft proposal to its Advisory Committee on the Medical Uses of Isotopes (ACMUI), which includes several SNM members, for review.

The NRC staff draft proposal would change current licensing requirements (10 CFR Part 35) to a special certification (i.e. in cardiology, endocrinology, nephrology, pulmonology, or urology) in the organ or system plus an accelerated course (defined as 200 classroom hours plus 50 cases) for physicians wishing to limit nuclear medicine practice to one organ system. The draft also proposes a four-month integrated training program for all other nuclear medicine practitioners.

Marvin B. Cohen, MD, chief of the

Nuclear Medicine Service at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Sepulveda, CA, introduced a motion, which the Board defeated, calling for the SNM to endorse the current NRC regulations stipulating a six-month training program for all practitioners using radionuclides.

"Cardiovascular nuclear medicine procedures are some of the most complex, difficult, and demanding nuclear medicine procedures, requiring a detailed knowledge not only of the principles of radiologic and health physics, but also, equally, detailed knowledge of methods of radiation detection, image formation and processing, computer utilization, and image interpretation," said Dr. Cohen, who added that proponents of reduced requirements ignore the problem of self-referrals in cardiology.

[After the ACMUI reviews the draft, the NRC staff will rework the proposal and present it to the NRC commissioners. If the commissioners give approval, the NRC will publish an official proposal in the *Federal Register* and invite comments from the public. Sometime after the public comment period, the final rulemaking will be published in the *Federal Register*.]

The Government Relations Committee introduced a motion, adopted by the Board, stating that the SNM officially recognizes the clinical value of dual- and single-photon absorptiometry "performed under the supervision of a nuclear medicine physician and recommends that all third-party payers provide reimbursement."

Letty G. Lutzker, MD, associate director of radiology at Woodhull Hospital in Brooklyn, NY, reported that the Office of Health Technology Assessment (OHTA) is completing a study of all bone mineral evaluation techniques for the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), which makes decisions on Medicare reimbursement policies.

In the president-elect's report, Dr. Dworkin updated the Board on the activities of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS). [Founded in 1965, the CMSS is composed of 24 groups. James J. Conway, MD, is the SNM delegate to the CMSS, and Dr. Dworkin is the alternate.]

The CMSS is organizing a preceptorship program for congressional aides and other government employees to visit medical institutions and learn more about each specialty. "A study indicated that only 2% of the aides to senators and to members of the House of Representatives have a background in the health care field, and often advisors on medical legislation have no background in health care," said Dr. Dworkin, who is also chief of the Nuclear Medicine Department at the William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, MI.

Duplicate Abstract Submissions

Richard C. Reba, MD, of the Scientific Program Committee, reported that the committee has grown concerned over "putatively duplicate abstracts" submitted to the SNM 33rd Annual Meeting to be held this June in Washington, DC. "The committee will institute a policy of rejecting submissions when obvious duplication of abstracts is uncovered," said Dr. Reba, who is also director of the Nuclear Medicine Division at George Washington University Hospital.

The SNM also created a formal mechanism for establishing cosponsorship of meetings. A committee, made up of the SNM vice president and the chairpersons of the General Program Committee and the Continuing Education and Course Approval Subcommittee, will receive and evaluate cosponsorship proposals, explained Dr. Reba.

Dr. Goris introduced a resolution for the Board to form a task group to study the possibility of untangling the annual scientific meeting from com-

mercial activities. The nonscientific portions of the meeting, as well as the large number of papers and simultaneous sessions, has hampered the exchange of ideas, explained Dr. Goris. "The scientific part has become a marathon, and discussion is reduced to a minimum," he added. The Board defeated the motion.

Fifth World Congress

The Board approved the proposal from the SNM General Program Committee to hold the Fifth World Congress of the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology in conjunction with the 1990 SNM Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. [The World Congress is held every four years in a different country. Planning committees from several countries will present proposals this November during the Fourth World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for hosting the 1990 meeting.]

The Canadian Association of Nuclear Medicine is planning to propose that the Fifth World Congress be held in Montreal, and the association has invited the SNM to move its 1990 Annual Meeting to Montreal.

Both groups agreed on the advantages of a joint SNM-World Federation meeting: attendees with limited funding would not be forced to choose between two major meetings in one year; exhibitors would be spared the expense of two meetings; the science presented at a joint meeting would attract more abstracts of higher quality; the SNM Central Office staff and resources would substantially reduce the risk of holding an international meeting with limited staff and funding.

After a lengthy discussion, the Board directed that the SNM Central Office explore the possible consequences of withdrawing from contracts for 1990 with the Washington Convention Center and for the 12,000 room-nights reserved at area hotels

in an effort to remain flexible until the World Federation decides on the location of the 1990 World Congress.

Proposed Honorary Member

William G. Myers, PhD, MD, historian of the SNM, proposed that Rosalyn S. Yalow, PhD, be designated as an honorary member of the Society. In 1977, Dr. Yalow received the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine for her work with the late Solomon Berson, MD, in the conception and development of radioimmunoassay. The Board adopted the proposal, which will also require a two-thirds vote of the membership attending the Business Meeting this June in Washington.

The Socio-Economic Affairs Committee reported that it plans to present a document on occupational radiation exposure during pregnancy at the Annual Meeting in June. The committee is also exploring the issue of third-party reimbursement for positron emission computed tomography (PET).

R. Edward Coleman, MD, of the Scientific Affairs and Research Committee, recommended that the SNM develop a policy in support of the use of animals in biomedical research (see *Newsline*, March 1986, p. 323).

The Task Force on Interrelationships with NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) proposed the formation of an NMR Club, with an emphasis on NMR spectroscopy, for the exchange of knowledge and experience.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Recruitment of Basic Scientists reported that it is conducting a survey to determine the "perceived need by nuclear medicine services for basic scientists." The committee also proposed that the Academic Council be charged with a study on the availability and nature of training programs "which do or could prepare basic scientists for integration in nuclear medicine."

From the Subcommittee on Nuclear Medicine Nomenclature, the Board received a report on the CPT-4 (current procedural terminology) used by third-party payers to encode reimbursement of charges. Merton A. Quaife, MD, chairman of the subcommittee and the SNM representative on the American Medical Association's (AMA) CPT-4 Advisory Committee, said that he will "continue to press for acceptance of updated codes and terminology to define more clearly the contemporary practice of nuclear medicine consultation and service."

Dr. Quaife, who is also director of the Division of Nuclear Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, said that his subcommittee's priorities include: acceptance of the revision of the cardiovascular section in nuclear medicine CPT-4 1986; the inclusion of a code and terminology delineating single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT); and continued explanation of the dual listing of *in vitro* nuclear medicine coding within the nuclear medicine section.

Education & Research Awards

The SNM Education and Research Foundation announced that it awarded four student fellowships to: Carolyn Cidis, Johns Hopkins University (preceptor, Dean Wong, MD); Sanjiv Bais, University of Pennsylvania (preceptor, Abbas Alavi, MD); Helen Hess, State University of New York at Buffalo (preceptor, Hank F. Kung, PhD); Timothy Sell, Duke University (preceptor, Robert H. Jones, MD).

The Foundation also awarded one pilot research grant to Janet M. Bartlett, PhD, assistant professor of nuclear pharmacy at Purdue University in Indiana, for investigating an *in vitro* screen for potential cartilage imaging agents.

Linda E. Ketchum