

One New Council Approved, Two Old Ones Merge

SNM BOARD OF TRUSTEES DECIDES TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES ABROAD

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The Board of Trustees has passed a resolution to distribute Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) educational and scientific services to non-North Americans. The decision, which was made during the Winter Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, in February, reflects the sentiments of the many members who feel that international outreach is a critical component of the Society's mission.

“It seems to me that the Society has a need for continued growth,” said B. Leonard Holman, MD, president of the SNM, in his opening remarks to the trustees. “We have explored virtually all reasonable growth potentials in the United States (US) and North American markets, and we have discovered that we really are poorly represented in the international market.” He pointed out, for example, that 3,500 people belong to Japan's nuclear medicine organization, but that only about 100 are members of SNM, which has about 900 non-North American members overall.

Benefits Cited

The resolution, proposed by the executive committee, reads “Resolved: that the Society of Nuclear Medicine expand its efforts over the long term

to improve marketing of Society memberships, products and services internationally.”

Dr. Holman said the Society is an international one, and that nuclear medicine professionals throughout the world could benefit from journal subscriptions and attendance at Society meetings. Other members agreed. “There are a lot of Third World people that are really starved for somebody to talk to,” said Albert Driedger, MD, of Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario, when asked to comment about the resolution. “It needn't take a lot of effort, a complimentary journal now and then would do a lot.”

This is not the first time the Society has courted non-North Americans. During his term as president in 1986, Michael Welch, PhD, held a reception for members from abroad during the annual meeting in Houston, Texas. These members met with Society leaders and host city officials, and his reception idea has become a tradition repeated by SNM presidents since then. But the other idea of that year was much less well received. “When I was president, there was a move to start an international chapter and the Europeans got really upset,” Dr. Welch said. The proposed chapter was perceived as a third European

society that would have been in direct competition with the two organizations in Europe at the time.

Cooperation Stressed

Sensitive to this history, Dr. Holman addressed the issue during his opening remarks. “I would like to emphasize that there is no attempt at this point to compete with the national and regional, non-US nuclear medicine organizations in any way,” he said. “In fact, it would be in the interests of the Society to work more effectively with these groups, cooperatively, and to leave the socioeconomic interests of the non-North American groups to these organizations. But the scientific and educational aspects of the Society might indeed play an important role in the development of nuclear medicine throughout the world.”

Although international marketing has the support of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees and many, if not most, of the membership, not every Society member is comfortable with the notion the resolution represents.

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cal, socioeconomic and organizational level, it's hard to conceive of it as being truly international,” one member said. Dr. Driedger agreed. “The Society has a large political agenda to deal with the American scene. The question is whether non-American members get full benefit from that situation. . . . The Society would like to be international, but it has this housekeeping job it hasn't found anyone else to do.” He said that for this reason, some nuclear medicine physicians who are not Americans have decided not to join. He added, however, that Canadians are pleased that the Society voted in Phoenix to provide a grant of US \$2,173 to the new Society of Nuclear Medicine Canada, which is not a chapter, but rather a separately incorporated offshoot of SNM chaired by Dr. Driedger.

Other Issues

In other developments, the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Council, proposed by William MacIntyre, PhD, and C. Leon Partain, MD, PhD, was approved. As a newly created council, it will have provisional status for one year, but will become a permanent council after that time if a continuing need for its activities is shown. More than 140 SNM mem-

bers signed a petition to create the council.

The Computer Council and the Instrumentation Council voted to form a single council, largely because of the great overlap in concerns and membership of the two. The easiest mechanism to accomplish that was to dissolve Instrumentation into the new Computer and Instrumentation Council, which now has their combined budgets.

The trustees also approved a resolution to foster recruitment of basic scientists—research biologists, chemists, computer scientists, mathematicians, physicists—to work in the field of nuclear medicine. The National Institutes of Health, the National Academy of Sciences and colleges and universities will be receiving letters from the Society pointing out the need for this work and the opportunities available for researchers in nuclear medicine.

The quality assessment of physicians received attention from the board, which passed a resolution supporting the Council of Medical Specialty Societies' (CMSS) attempts to maintain, strengthen and evolve ways to assess physician competence. The CMSS, an organization of specialty societies including SNM, conceded that the area is complex and potentially controversial, but asserted that it

is best for such assessments to be carried out by professional medical organizations within the private sector. Interest in the subject was spurred by HR 3231, which, if passed, would require the periodic competency certification of physicians as a condition of participation under the Medicare program. (The bill has been referred to committee for study.)

The board also passed a resolution supporting the continued use of radioimmunoassays. In addition, an inactive status of membership for technologists who leave the field temporarily was approved by the board.

SNM Finances

Richard J. Oszustowicz, chairman of the audit committee, gave the Board of Trustees a historical view of the Society's finances. “For those of you interested in nostalgia, 10 years ago your balance sheet was valued at \$557,000. At that point you were not panicking, but you remained steady at the helm, and today you are a \$3,440,000 organization. You grew 617%; your equity is strong. The leadership from back then has reached its goal.”

The stock market drop of October 19, 1987, that caused the value of most stocks to plunge had a minimal effect, if any at all, on SNM's conservatively diversified investments. SNM's fiscal year ended September 30, 1987, with its financial position gaining in strength. Its assets increased by 9.4% over 1986, to \$3,440,888, and total members' equity increased 16.6%, to \$2,668,039. Average revenues per day increased to \$10,886 in 1987, up from \$9,772 in 1986, with \$1.57 in cash to cover every \$1.00 of liability.

[For more information on this meeting, or on the SNM organizational structure and budget, contact: The Society of Nuclear Medicine, Dept. 487NL, 136 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016-6760, (212)889-0717.]

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