
COMMENTARY

LINES FROM THE PRESIDENT FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

Several events have occurred that should affect Societal function and nuclear medicine in the coming years. The Committee set up to search for an Executive



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Director, which was chaired by Barbara Croft, PhD, immediate past president, completed its charge and selected Mr. Torry M. Sansone as the new executive director of The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM). Mr. Sansone had served as the executive director of two national associations, the most recent being the Emergency Nurses Association, which he had headed since 1981. He joins the SNM with proven office management skills, an acute awareness

of the needs and desires of organizational members, and inexhaustible enthusiasm to represent the Society in all matters as instructed by the Board and the leadership. We welcome Mr. Sansone to our Society and look forward to helping him improve the organization and reactivate its growth. Torry Sansone will certainly make time to listen to all of you after he begins work on November 1. He may need several days to adjust, however, since he is relocating to New York City from Chicago.

Tech Recruitment

For some time, recruiting candidates for nuclear medicine technology has been difficult and frequently unsuccessful, all while the need (demand) for trained technologists continues to grow. The reason is a shrinking number (supply) of real or potential candidates. Science and health related careers have lost their allure and are experiencing significant declines throughout the country. Like the other fields, nuclear medicine technology has been adversely affected. Although some local nuclear medicine technology training programs have been able to sustain candidate recruitment, for the most part, this problem has grown to the extent that the future practice of nuclear medicine could be in jeopardy. The Summit on Manpower, a collaboration of 17 health care organizations, has been working on recruit-

ment on a national level for two years, but its efforts have to be expanded.

The recruitment issue is not solely confined to technologists but also includes scientists and physicians. Training programs for radiochemists and radiopharmacists are few, and candidates for the available positions are even fewer. The anticipated proliferation of clinical PET centers will place a serious stress on the supply of scientists in high technology nuclear medicine and, as for the technologists, a national strategy needs to be developed and implemented before the situation deteriorates further. While a great deal of rhetoric has been uttered on the recruitment problems, little has been done to change the negative trend. Although several people and groups within the Society and the Technologist Section have addressed this problem, an amalgamation of these recruitment efforts might be the best way to develop a national nuclear medicine recruitment strategy in which technologists, physicians, and scientists pool their resources in a synergistic effort. As President, I am exploring this idea with the groups most prominently involved to see what should or can be done to accomplish this objective. I will report on these contacts in my next message.

Part 35 Petition

The SNM and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP) filed a Petition for Rule Making Change with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) seeking changes in the existing NRC Part 35 Medical Use regulations, which limit physician use to only investigational new drug/new drug application (IND/NDA) approved radiopharmaceuticals, require strict adherence to manufacturers' instructions for eluting generators and preparing kit radiopharmaceuticals, and limit physicians to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved indications and routes of administration described in the package insert.

Variations from these regulations are not common and pose no adverse radiation safety threat to patients and personnel. However, because strict adherence to many of these regulations can, at times, conflict with the traditional practice of nuclear medicine, recent strict enforcement of these regulations by the NRC has resulted in numerous citations and fines. The petition, which needs your written support,

intends to moderate the regulations so that the future practice of nuclear medicine and pharmacy will not be compromised. Your letters supporting the SNM/ACNP petition should be sent to the Secretary of the Commission, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Docketing and Service Branch, Docket #PRM-35-9, Washington, District of Columbia 20555. The comment period is scheduled to end December 14, 1989.

Supplier Acquisitions

The recent announcement of the purchases of two major radiopharmaceutical suppliers came somewhat as a surprise but was not completely unexpected since corporate takeovers have become commonplace in our society. The prime issue, however, is not the who and why of these acquisitions but rather the reason(s) why such transactions have become so common over the past decade. Undoubtedly, lower than anticipated profit margins, the proliferation of central radiopharmacies, and the prolonged and costly development and approval of new radiopharmaceuticals have contributed to this trend. We certainly welcome the new corporations and wish them a long and profitable future. We would like to point out to them that the SNM/ACNP support of Senator Orrin G. Hatch's legisla-

tion on (S.845), the FDA Revitalization Act, should strengthen the FDA by providing it with additional resources to expand its capability and facilitate FDA review and approval of new radiopharmaceuticals in the future.

The Washington office, conjointly supported by the SNM and the ACNP, and ably staffed by Melissa Brown with the addition of Valerie Fedio, continues to provide timely and appropriate responses to legislative issues that affect the two organizations.

The SNM leadership from the beginning has been dedicated to the pursuit of clinical PET reimbursement through the legislative process, and it will continue to support activities already in motion. The ACNP has decided to support a commercial effort and will manage these activities through its central office. This variance in approach merely reflects the policy differences of the SNM and the ACNP, not an uncommon objective. Differences between the SNM and ACNP will certainly arise again, but as long as we respect the differences and realize that there is usually more than one way to reach the objective, the collaboration should not be adversely affected.

Richard A. Holmes, MD
President, The Society of Nuclear Medicine

NEWS BRIEFS

NCRP Radiation Protection Award

The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) has announced the initiation of the Robert D. Moseley, Jr. Award in Radiation Protection in Medicine to be given to a young investigator in the field for an outstanding research paper. The award's objective is to stimulate the interest of young physicians in sciences allied with radiation protection and measurements, particularly those sciences that relate to the medical uses of ionizing radiation.

The awardee will receive \$1,000 and travel expenses to the NCRP's

Annual Meeting in Washington, District of Columbia, April 4-5, 1990, at which the award will be presented.

The award was founded as a tribute to Robert D. Moseley, Jr., a diagnostic radiologist who was widely known for fostering research in radiology and nuclear medicine.

The principal author of the research paper must be a United States resident, who is enrolled in or has completed an approved residency program within the last ten years in diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, or radiation oncology. Other qualified persons including those with postdoctoral experience in medical physics or radiobiology will be

considered.

All manuscripts submitted for consideration must have been previously published or have been accepted for publication within the current calendar year. The annual deadlines for submission of papers to the NCRP are January 15 for previously published papers, and December 31 for papers accepted for publication. Manuscripts will be selected on the basis of scientific merit, originality, and applicability to the field.

For further information about the award, write the NCRP at: 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 800, Bethesda, Maryland 20814. Or call: (301) 657-2652. ■