

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. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

Diagnostic Coding Grace Period Ends

Effective October 1, 1989, any Medicare claim filed without an ICD-9-CM diagnostic code will be denied by The Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA) carriers. However, according to Max Buffington, chief of HCFA's claim processing branch, claims submitted with an inaccurate diagnostic code will not be denied outright. Instead, carriers will send the physician a "development letter" requesting more information on the claim. This will occur if a physician gives a diagnostic code that obviously does not match the procedure code. The American Medical Association will publish abstracted sets of the ICD-9-CM codes, grouped by medical specialty, in the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) 1990 minibook series. Physicians who have questions about the new codes should contact their local carriers.

During the six months from April 1 to October 1, 1989, when use of the diagnostic codes was first required (see *Newsline*, May 1989 p.580), physicians used the codes on 96% of all claims submitted. Mr. Buffington says that a 96% compliance rate in six months is excellent and that he is very pleased with the efforts physicians have made to comply with the new diagnostic code requirements. ■

Mallinckrodt Fellowship Applications Sought

Now in its second year, the Mallinckrodt Annual Fellowship will again provide \$30,000 to a physician fellow who is active in nuclear medicine research or development. The research grant was established by

Mallinckrodt Medical, Inc. and is administered by The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM). William J. MacIntyre, PhD, nuclear physicist, department of nuclear medicine, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, chairman of the SNM Awards Committee, emphasizes the nonrestrictive nature of the award. "In this era of increasing limitations on grants, it is interesting to note that this award is completely unrestricted as to topic. All physician fellows who are active in any phase of nuclear medicine research or development are eligible to apply."

The award's recipient will be announced at the SNM Annual Meeting, June 19-22, 1990, in Washington, District of Columbia. Applicants should submit a resumé, a detailed account of their research project including prior accomplishments on the project, and a description of their future plans. Each applicant must provide at least two letters supporting the application. The deadline for application is January 19, 1990, and submissions should be mailed to: William J. MacIntyre, PhD, The Society of Nuclear Medicine, 136 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016-6760. ■

DOE Establishes Isotope Production and Distribution Office

The Department of Energy (DOE) has established an Office of Isotope Production and Distribution in Germantown, Maryland. The office, which has been in operation since May 30, 1989, has overall responsibility for the development of the Isotope Program's policies and objectives and the management of the production, distribution, and supply of stable isotopes and radioisotopes for various

applications including medicine. The office provides the raw materials of isotope production to nuclear pharmaceutical houses, which then manufacture and market the isotope products to individual researchers and hospitals.

Currently, many of the isotopes produced through the Isotope Program are used by DOE researchers. However, Donald E. Erb, director of the Isotope Office, told *Newsline* that he would like to see the DOE become "more sensitive to the existing and emerging needs for both stable [isotopes] and radioisotopes." Mr. Erb defines the office's mission as "supplying products and related services that make a substantial contribution to the quality of life." He points to the occasional shortages of various elements and stresses the need to produce a steady supply of isotopes for researchers, both inside and outside of the DOE.

A recent review conducted by the DOE Office of Health and Environmental Research Programs recommends that DOE consider providing a dedicated accelerator for the supply of short-lived radionuclides, which would be used for research, diagnostic, and therapeutic applications. The Isotope Office is now considering this recommendation.

With Congressional approval, the Office of Management and Budget has authorized the Isotope Office to establish a revolving fund that will reinvest the proceeds from the sale of isotopes into further isotope production. Congress has appropriated over \$16 million for the Isotope Program during the 1990 fiscal year. With this funding in place, Mr. Erb says he expects the Isotope Program to ably respond to the needs of the research community. ■