

Finding it tough to stay abreast of the whirlwind of activities happening within the SNM? *Newsline* will keep you up to date with a new feature called *SNM SourceLine*. This section covers the news you need as a Society member— from committee updates to profiles of newsmakers. We welcome any suggestions and ideas for *SNM SourceLine*. Please send written material to: Stacey Silver, Associate Editor, *Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, 1850 Samuel Morse Dr., Reston, VA 22090-5316.

NEWSMAKERS

SNM Technologists: Expanding in New Directions



Becky Cacciatore, CNMT

Practicing nuclear medicine technology since 1976, Becky Cacciatore, CNMT, is the current president of the Society of Nuclear Medicine-Technologist Section. Her other affiliations include the

Florida Nuclear Medicine Technologists and the Radiological Business Managers Association.

Q: How has the role of nuclear medicine technologists changed in recent years?

A: Currently, technologists are cross training, learning multiple skills and redesigning their own jobs. Due to changes in reimbursement and the dramatic impact of managed care, technologists are being asked to perform procedures that they were not previously required to execute. For example, a rural hospital may not be able to afford a CT, MRI, nuclear medicine and ultrasound technologist, so technologists are being trained to fulfill all those needs. Interestingly, there was a medical university hospital that was recently advertising for either a nuclear medicine technologist or a MRI/CT technologist that they would train to do angiography and fly on the helicopter emergency crew.

Q: What can doctors learn from technologists?

A: Technologists are actually the "front line" for physicians. We are knowledgeable, caring people who have the ability to do multiple tasks, particularly

in the areas of patient communication. We take the initial patient evaluations and really listen to patient concerns.

Q: How is health care reform impacting nuclear medicine technologists?

A: The health care reform issue is much more active on the state level than on the national level, and we've seen rapid staff cut-backs in hospitals. Technologists must redesign their jobs in order to keep them. This involves expanding imaging skills, computer skills and administrative skills.

Q: What are some of the biggest challenges that are confronting technologists?

A: In my opinion, the most important concerns facing the membership of the Technologist Section are those affecting the rapidly changing health care environment. These concerns are decreasing reimbursement, lack of professional recognition, health care costs and encroachment from other specialties. The individual technologist has yet another group of concerns such as changing salary demands, increasing volumes of already complex studies, greater workloads due to staff reductions and increased patient responsibilities. These problems, both chronic and acute, are solvable.

Q: Are nuclear medicine technologists eagerly expanding their skills to adjust to these new demands?

A: They don't have a choice if they want to keep their jobs. Many technologists have realized that it makes them more marketable. Twenty years ago,

technologists did RIA (blood work), performed radiopharmacy with a generator, and by necessity technologists practiced some nursing, pharmacy, radiology and therapy skills as well as performing patient care. Technologists were probably more multiskilled 20 years ago.

Through the years, nuclear medicine technologists evolved and became more specialized in imaging studies; we had to learn how to read EKGs and perform stress tests. Because of downsizing, technologists are now being asked to perform duties that are reflective of nuclear medicine technology practices 20 years ago.

Q: How has the training of incoming technologists changed over the years?

A: Technologists have to learn almost twice as much information today than in 1974 when I was training. Incoming technologists are getting into areas of stress testing, advanced computer applications and processing skills, and PET imaging which takes their role a step further.

Q: How do you feel about next year's first joint meeting with the SNM, SNM-TS and the ACNP?

A: I think it's a wonderful idea because we will meet as a team. The nuclear medicine community will become closer and speak with one voice. We hope to achieve a communication link with common goals and interests rather than approaching an area from three different viewpoints of nuclear medicine. In the past, we have not always communicated with one another in a successful manner but now we can be a more cohesive group.

SNM ONLINE AND IN TOUCH

The SNM Reston office recently logged onto the Internet by establishing a permanent connection. Society members will now be able to communicate with SNM headquarters via e-mail. To reach an SNM staff member, simply key in the e-mail address by typing his or her first initial and last name followed by @snm.org. For example, the e-mail address of Torry Mark Sansone, executive director of SNM, is: tsansone@snm.org. The staff is now compiling a complete listing of all SNM members' e-mail addresses.

"Electronic information interchange is a living entity that will continue to grow and shift courses. SNM intends to monitor emerging technologies and focus on those that best address our member's needs and accessibility," said Mark Rogers, SNM director of information services. This will be one more option for members to communicate with staff members. Here are some services that are currently available, in the planning stages or future possibilities:

- **Electronic mail**— SNM now is currently hooked up to e-mail, allowing members to communicate with the SNM staff. Information transferred via e-mail is manipulable; users can make attachments to files, control the flow of e-mail and redirect the information to other users.

- **World-Wide Web**— Within the next two or three months, the Society plans to establish a "home page" or menu of options on the Web. SNM staff will be able to input up-to-the-minute changes on meetings and events. Meeting deadline reminders and election bulletin information will also be available on the Web, as will registration forms for next year's Mid-Winter and Annual Meetings. Envisioned services include: SNM leadership directories, newsletters, the membership list and membership applications. As the home page grows, users may eventually be able to access abstract forms, which will ensure that all abstracts are uniform in format and typeface.

- **News Group**— The Society is planning to establish its own newsgroup or electronic bulletin board that will create a forum for radiopharmacy, health care policy and medical practice issues. It will also enable the Society to post bulletins that all members can receive on a timely basis. Systems will be in place to support the news group by late this summer. Feel free to call Mark Rogers at (703) 708-9000, ext. 245 with questions on how to access, manipulate and retrieve input or with any suggestions on other services that may be useful to members.

THE SNM ADVANTAGE

As a member of the Society, you receive not only professional recognition but an abundance of other benefits.

The obvious benefits:

- Yearly subscriptions to *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*.
- Complimentary membership directories, which serve as a vital networking tool in the nuclear medicine industry.
- Discounts to scientific, clinical, continuing education presentations, commercial exhibits and the Mid-Winter and Annual Meetings of SNM. The Annual Meeting acts as the primary source agent of SNM educational efforts throughout the year.

Benefits you may not know about:

- Discounts on slide/tape programs covering a wide variety of subjects designed for classroom audiovisual use and self-instruction.
- Discounts on selected new books and monographs published by the Society.
- Outstanding achievement awards presented to Society members for significant contributions in the field.
- MasterCard credit lines for eligible members (with special rates for stu-

dents who are members).

- Discounts on Avis car rentals.
- Insurance plans including disability income and catastrophic major medical insurance programs. Technologists, in addition, are offered a liability insurance program provided at a group discount.

What is the Society planning to do for you? The Society's number one priority is membership satisfaction, says Lori Ann Tremmel, director of membership services. By the end of 1995 or early 1996, SNM will begin to distribute the first annual satisfaction survey to all members (physicians, scientists, technologists, students), which will enable SNM staff to stay in touch with members' needs. This survey will serve as a tool through which to reorganize programs to best benefit SNM members. Even though the Society's membership has remained steady over the years, the satisfaction survey will ensure that SNM responds appropriately to its membership.

Moreover, SNM recently enlisted the services of Marc Associates, a lobbying firm in Washington, DC to track legislative and regulatory issues that impact the nuclear medicine field.

WEIGH IN ON RESEARCH

The Ad Hoc Committee on Research has launched a survey to assess SNM members involvement in research activities. The committee has designed a one-page survey form that all members will receive this month. The data will be used to determine the research activities of the membership and provide the committee with a better understanding of the sources of support for the research. The information will likewise serve as a guide to the committee to get a clearer national picture of research training in nuclear medicine. Results of the survey will enable the committee to formulate appropriate action plans to enhance research in the areas of support and training in nuclear medicine. Completed surveys should be sent to SNM headquarters: Society of Nuclear Medicine, 1850 Samuel Morse Dr., Reston, VA 22090-5316.

The committee also plans to present a CME program at the Annual Meeting devoted to "Research in Nuclear Medicine: Plans for the Future," on Monday, June 12th at 1:30-3:00. The program's goal is to provide SNM membership with a comprehensive examination of nuclear medicine research activities.

—Compiled by Stacey Silver