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Lines From the President

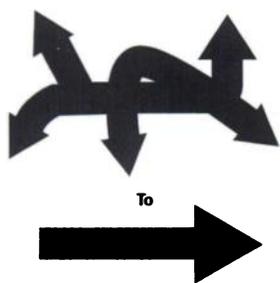
"No man who is enthusiastic about his work has anything to fear from life"

—Samuel Goldwyn

In the tradition of politicians, I want to thank all my friends and colleagues for this opportunity to serve as your President. It is my goal to build on the work of my predecessors to enhance the value of your Society in our professional activities. We have a skilled, motivated and dedicated staff working on behalf of 11,267 worldwide members to publish our Journals and provide a world-class annual meeting.

In October 1996, my predecessor, Michael Devous, organized a retreat to make sure the Society was serving the needs of our membership. One major outcome was a revised mission statement:

Mission Statement Changes Goals



The Society of Nuclear Medicine is a multidisciplinary professional medical organization dedicated to promoting the value of Nuclear Medicine through excellence in education, research and clinical practice of the discipline.

The retreat was successful because it focused the leadership on key goals to fulfill the mission. The Society established a series of initiatives and programs in the U.S. and abroad to assure the appropriate use of high-quality nuclear medicine procedures. Specific programs will support the Inter-Society/Industry Program, establish a laboratory accreditation program, develop a means of physician competency assessment, and work with our colleagues in industry to assure rapid and fair evaluation of applications reviewed by federal agencies.

The Society is evolving to meet the challenges faced by our membership. Three specific issues on the horizon are that (a) technologists may be required to pass a new examination for national accreditation in the U.S.; (b) physicians must provide evidence of ongoing competency for reappointment to their hospitals; and (c) laboratories will be required to provide proof that examinations are recorded and interpreted according to standards established by recognized organizations. Your Society will provide the interactive teaching opportunities to prepare our members for these encounters and work with our sister organizations to establish meaningful and fair criteria for assessment of competency and laboratory accreditation. These materials will be available at meetings, as printed documents (two major continuing education books are scheduled for publication over the next 12 months) and soon on the Internet.

The Society, the Technologist Section and the European Association of Nuclear Medicine have launched a program to document the utilization of nuclear medicine procedures.

Data will be entered by member institutions of each organi-

zation to determine the total number of studies performed. Once the data collection mechanism is in place, the program will be expanded to identify the indications for performing the examinations and finally to the relationship of examination results with outcomes.

As we work to address today's tasks, we are also preparing for the future. For example, one major area for growth is the study of how medical research can promote healthy individual performance in daily tasks, at work and in school. Human performance is of course influenced by how well our brains function in learning, as well as by common physical factors such as the importance to optimum functioning of a good night's rest and control of our eating habits.

In the area of learning difficulties in children ("Why doesn't Johnny do well in school?"), researchers need to know how and whether the brain is functioning healthily. Activation studies in conjunction with brain blood flow determinations help define the process and to identify aberrant processing. Such knowledge may result in alternative teaching methods or medical therapy. Similar research will address sleep, eating disorders, and eventually the very process of aging. Furthermore, nuclear medicine has an important part to play in these future developments.

To ensure that nuclear medicine is a major force in health care, we must strengthen the quality of our examinations and the competence of the nuclear medicine staff performing studies. Creating a threshold for quality and assuring that all practitioners of nuclear medicine exceed that threshold should be our goal, a particularly important one as the technical complexity of study performance and analysis increases and as our colleagues requesting the procedures expect us to understand intricate pathophysiology. Your Society has initiated programs through the Commission on Health Care Policy and Practice to address these needs. Working in concert with committees, commissions and councils, the organization is developing the high-quality teaching materials and courses our members need to offer the highest-quality procedures. The Society is also embarking on an outreach program to practitioners from other specialties who perform nuclear medicine procedures so that they too can perform these procedures at the highest standards.

Providing this education to all practitioners, regardless of their formal affiliation with the SNM, is a major part of our overall plan. The higher the quality of nuclear medicine in the community, the more useful the procedure data will be and the more likely a clinician is to employ further nuclear medicine procedures on his or her patients.

We are experiencing the Chinese curse of living in interesting times. Yes, we have to work harder, yes we have to work smarter, and, yes, your Society needs to do more for you. Chaos always makes for opportunity. Your Society is capitalizing on this occasion by bringing more of what we need to you, our members.