



# Government Relations Update

## NRC Update

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission continues to move forward with finalizing Part 35 revisions. In a recent release of the draft final rule to the NRC's Advisory Committee on the Medical Uses of Isotopes (ACMUI), it became apparent that the commission had only partially met the recommendations of the ACNP/SNM. In the diagnostic area, ACNP/SNM recommended that the NRC retreat from most of the regulations in the proposed rule and focus instead on training and experience and the radiation safety thresholds of Part 20. However, in the draft final rule, many regulations remained in the diagnostic area. Important concessions were proposed in the use and calibration of dose calibrators, radiation protection program requirements and supervision provisions.

The NRC also made few changes to the therapeutic nuclear medicine area, focusing on minor recordkeeping problems. Again, however, important concessions were reached concerning the development of a radiation protection

program and the ability to draft written directives using a range.

One of the most significant changes proposed by the NRC in its draft final rule is a return to the old method of approving training and experience. The agency had originally proposed focusing on individual qualifications in the area of radiation safety. This led to drastic reductions in the time spent conducting classroom and practical study but relied on an exam to assure competency. The agency has now dropped that proposal, choosing instead to focus on training programs rather than on individuals. This will eliminate the exam and compel NRC to evaluate each training program outside of ACGME programs to assure that it offers four months of training, which includes classroom and practical training. The regulations will also rely on preceptor statements to validate practical experience.

NRC's ACMUI was scheduled to review the draft final rule in late March and the commissioners are expected to review and approve the final package by early June 1999. Once the commission publishes the final rule, new regula-

tions will go into effect six months after publication, with the exception of training and experience, which is likely to take two years to implement.

### National Licensure Initiative Still Moving Forward

The SNM-Technologist Section, as a member of the Alliance for Quality Medical Imaging (mentioned in previous issues of *Newsline*), continues to look for a sponsor on Capitol Hill to introduce its bill requiring minimum educational standards for imaging technologists. SNM-TS, along with the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) and other members of the Alliance, have approved final bill language, but some members of Congress remain concerned about linking these standards to Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. The ASRT will be bringing members from around the country to Washington, including Curt Gray, CNMT, and Valerie Cronin, CNMT, of SNM-TS, to educate members on the Hill about the importance of moving this legislation forward.

—David Nichols



**Joseph F. Ross,  
MD 1910-1999**

### In Memoriam Joseph F. Ross, MD 1910-1999

Joseph F. Ross, MD, co-founder of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) and a pioneer in the use of radioisotopes for hematologic studies, died February 26, 1999. He was 88.

Ross's research in the use of  $^{59}\text{Fe}$  in red blood cell studies led, during the Second World War, to a new storage method for whole blood used in transfusions. For his contribution to the war effort, Ross and his colleague, Clement Finch, MD, received the Presidential Certificate of Merit. In the late 1940s, he established two of the first Veterans Affairs radioisotope units at the Framingham, MA, and Boston VA hospitals.

Within the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Ross is equally known for his role in establishing the ABNM, in 1971, which marked a "coming of age" of the specialty. At that time, a new medical spe-

cialty board had not been created in many years, and Ross's organizational, diplomatic and legal knowledge played an important part in overcoming objections in certain sectors of medicine. In 1985, largely through his efforts, the ABNM was given primary board status, serving to crown Ross's efforts for recognition of nuclear medicine as separate discipline in organized medicine.

Ross was associate dean of the UCLA School of Medicine and was awarded emeritus status there during the 1980s. He was a recipient of the Van Meter Prize, the SNM Distinguished Service Award in 1984, and the SNM Special Presidential Recognition Award in 1991 for his "dedicated service and contributions to nuclear medicine." In 1995, he was given the SNM Nuclear Medicine Pioneer Award.

The president and leadership of SNM honor the passing of this memorable nuclear medicine pioneer.