



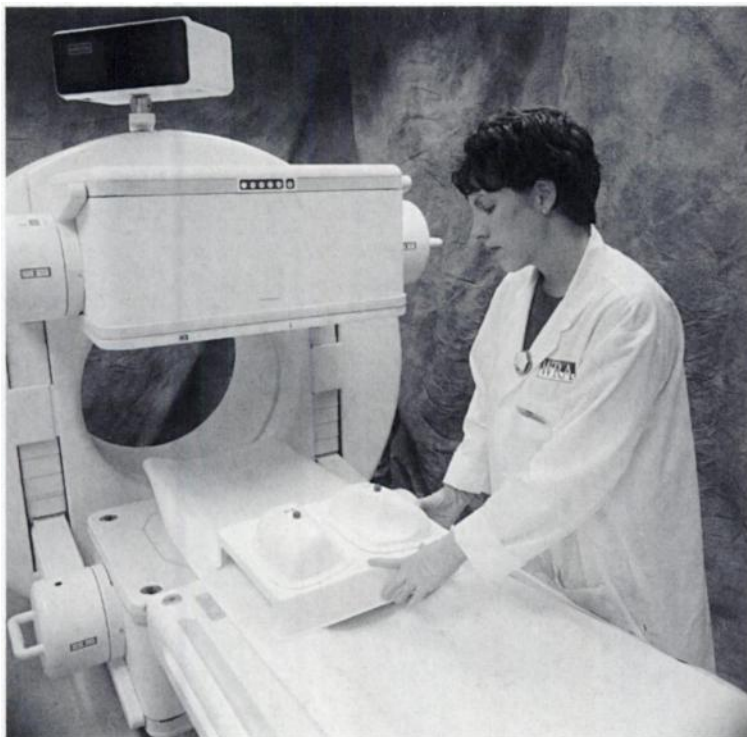
SNM Expands Testing and Accreditation Services

The Society of Nuclear Medicine is proud to offer the nuclear medicine community 2 new services, the Proficiency Testing Program (PTP) and the Practice Accreditation Program (PAP).

The PTP offers a 3-dimensional simulator that duplicates the size, structure, and density of a real organ to test the nuclear medicine professional's ability to detect the location, extent, and significance of possible abnormalities. Currently available is a 3-dimensional lung perfusion phantom. The cost of this study is \$625 for SNM members or \$695 for nonmembers, plus \$35 shipping and handling.

A quantitative cardiac phantom will be presented at the SNM annual meeting in June. This device will test the participant's ability to acquire and process SPECT rest/stress myocardial perfusion studies, to identify and quantify areas of perfusion abnormality, and to determine the diagnostic/prognostic significance of the findings.

Participants who purchase the simulators will receive instructions for preparation and scanning of the device and a response form to return the results to the SNM for evaluation



The PTP's 3-dimensional lung perfusion phantom.

by the SNM Scientific and Technical Advisory Board. Both technologists and physicians answer a series of questions related to the procedure. A summary report will be prepared for each study, and subscribers will receive confidential individual participant reports for each set of results submitted.

SNM's PAP offers practitioners the ability to assess and improve the quality of nuclear medicine at their facilities. We currently offer a program that uses physicians and scientists trained and certified as inspectors to review all aspects of nuclear medicine imaging and radiopharmaceutical services, from receipt of radioisotopes through imaging to result reporting.

The SNM Quality Assurance Committee has augmented its comprehensive inspection manual, which will provide the basis for on-site inspections. The new program will reflect current practice in nuclear medicine and recognize ongoing changes in practice, instrumentation, and radiopharmaceuticals, including PET and sentinel node devices. The extension of practice into nontraditional sites, such as telemedicine to distant hospitals and other facilities, will also be included, helping practitioners meet the challenges of the 21st century. Facilities meeting the criteria outlined in the accreditation manual will be awarded certification under the program for a 3-y period.

The PAP inspection fee for a single facility is \$3000. Components of a nuclear medicine practice reviewed under this comprehensive program include:

- staff qualifications and responsibilities,
- patient records and reports,
- technical procedure manual,
- facilities and equipment,
- quality control,
- imaging processes,
- radiopharmaceutical handling,
- quality management program, and
- bone densitometry.

SNM has been involved for a number of years in assisting nuclear medicine practitioners in honing their skills, increasing the overall quality of care to patients, and enhancing the practice of nuclear medicine. Along with the new PTP and PAP offerings, the SNM has CD-based Physician Evaluation Programs on bone imaging and myocardial perfusion

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patients with advanced disease might lead to using it in earlier stage patients, where potential exists for synergy with chemotherapy and possible durable complete remissions. With STR, the doses of radiation are substantially higher and the safety profiles considerably better than for the standard

approaches, and these are the desired characteristics for potentially improved cancer therapies.”

STR links ^{166}Ho with a drug that targets the bone, especially those areas of bone undergoing increased metabolism. These areas often take up the drug in greater quantities, providing the opportunity to deliver more radiation to areas of bone directly

affected by tumor. By injecting STR into the blood, the radiation can localize in tumors in the bone.

NeoRx has recently completed accrual on a phase I/II trial using STR in patients with multiple myeloma. Evaluation of these patients is ongoing. A phase III trial for patients with multiple myeloma is slated to begin later this year.

Public Affairs

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imaging, *SNM: Procedure Guideline Manual 1999*, and *Outcomes and Technology Assessment in Nuclear Medicine*. These may be purchased on the SNM Web site at www.snm.org. For more information on any of the programs listed in this article, please contact Sandra H. Griffith at 703-708-9000, ext. 1321, or by e-mail at sgriffith@snm.org.

HCFA Local Carrier Sends Draft Policy to Reviewers

In 1997 the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) defined a new entity, the independent diagnostic testing facility (IDTF), intended to replace the designation of independent physiological laboratory (IPL). An IDTF is a facility with a supervising physician that is independent of either a physician's office or a hospital. However, at that time the HCFA did not define the supervision required or the specific guidelines for an IDTF.

Recently, Xact Medicare Services, a contracted HCFA carrier for Pennsylvania, sent out a first draft of a local medical review policy on IDTFs that encompasses diagnostic tests in a variety of specialties. Reviewers were

asked to comment on the level of supervision, additional physician specialties, and nonphysician personnel requirements.

Randall Winn, MD, a member of SNM and a reviewer of the draft policy, provided a copy of the policy to SNM. On initial review, SNM staff discovered that certified nuclear medicine technologists (CNMTs) were omitted from the table of nonphysician qualifications. SNM staff sent a letter to Xact pointing out this omission and provided additional information on the educational and training requirements of CNMTs.

Although this document affects only the region covered by Xact, other carriers across the nation may be preparing their own IDTF guidelines. A careful review of these documents will be necessary to ensure that similar mistakes are not made. Those wishing to review the Xact draft policy document may do so by contacting the SNM public affairs department.

Society Prepares Letter on NRC Inspection Document

In February the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) announced plans to initiate a new medical inspection pilot program that would "...stream-

line inspection and enforcement of materials licensees.” The temporary instruction manual for this pilot program claims it is performance-based and risk-informed and that it focuses inspection efforts on licensee performance for radiation safety elements with safety-significant outcomes. However, a comment letter currently being prepared by SNM staff criticizes the inspection document for instituting a level of inspection effort and detail that to an outside observer would indicate that a highly risky procedure was being reviewed. The letter goes on to say that the SNM looks forward to the NRC publishing an inspection document that recognizes the low level of risk involved.

Upcoming Events

APC codes changes go into effect, July 1

Documents Available

SNM Comment Letter on IDTF
SNM Comment Letter on NRC
Inspection Manual
APC Alert 1
APC Taskforce Memo on HOPPS

—William Uffelman and
Amanda Sullivan