

From the SNM-TS President

I have been asked repeatedly, "What do you have planned for your year as president of the Technologist Section?" With the multitude of things going on throughout nuclear medicine, my hope and intent are to help find peaceful and acceptable solutions to issues facing us and to assist the Society of Nuclear Medicine–Technologist Section (SNM-TS) in making significant headway on the Strategic Plan.

Some of the issues we face include: reviewing nuclear medicine laboratory accreditation programs, reviewing the roles and positions of councils and sections, evaluating the budget system, and determining what structure would be most efficient and successful for SNM.

These are all complex issues and need further investigation. Unfortunately, often when we have to make important decisions on topics about which people have strong opinions, some individuals on all sides seem to dig in their heels instead of working together toward an agreeable solution. This is not to say controversy is bad—on the contrary, it is important and often necessary for growth. Only in the careful analysis and open discussion of an issue, which often carries constructive criticism, can a resolution representing progress be achieved. I hope that we can all look for solutions to these and other issues that will improve our organization, its membership, and the field of nuclear medicine as a whole.

While exploring the future of SNM and SNM-TS, we should not lose sight of the Strategic Plan, which will be of paramount importance throughout the coming year. This plan is especially refreshing and encouraging, because it is shared by both the SNM and SNM-TS. As an educator, the Strategic Plan is especially exciting for me, because education is its foundation: education of our members, referring practitioners, and the public.

During the Radiological Society of North America meeting in 1999, I was surprised to see "highlights" from the radiology exhibit at Disney's EPCOT Center, which included every area of diagnostic medical imaging except nuclear medicine. Within our own general

discipline, we sometimes seemed to have been forgotten. I have read magazine articles in which individuals discuss overcoming a disease with assistance from various medical modalities, including imaging. However, nuclear medicine is rarely mentioned. Television shows depict or discuss medical imaging modalities, but nuclear medicine again is rarely highlighted. We would do well to raise the public's level of awareness of our discipline.

As a participant in the Physician Outreach Program activities, it surprises me to learn of the number of referring physicians who think that nuclear medicine consists only of bone scans, thyroid imaging, and cardiac stress tests. And these same practitioners are surprised to read the case studies that are displayed and learn of the variety of studies that nuclear medicine has to offer.

Technologists are concerned by the decreasing numbers of physicians entering the field of nuclear medicine. Some technologists feel their departments (and personnel) are being held back from their full potentials because they no longer have a physician whose primary interest is in nuclear medicine. They find themselves without their most important advocate for the field, a situation that can lead to low morale. Because this situation appears to be widespread and growing, many technologists are now being placed in the position of championing nuclear medicine studies to radiologists. This is 1 of many changes for technologists, and the support of nuclear medicine physicians and scientists in this effort is certainly appreciated.

In an effort to deal with many of the changes and concerns facing technologists, the Technologist Section is involved with several organizations for allied health professional societies. The Summit on Radiologic Sciences and Sonography is 1 organization that currently is addressing many issues, including workplace conditions and the shortage of technologists. Another organization is promoting national licensure for technologists. The Medical Imaging and Radiation Oncology Data Alliance

(Continued on page 22N)

SNM-TS Message (Continued from page 20N)

collects and analyzes data on diagnostic imaging technologists and radiation therapists working in a variety of clinical settings. The Practice Analysis is a joint project with the American Society of Radiologic Technologists to help identify current trends in the practice of nuclear medicine and to assess whether the revised curriculum addresses those trends. The National Consortium on Health, Science, and Technology Education is an organization of state Departments of Education and professional societies working on the enhancement of education in grades K-12 with respect to allied health careers and increasing awareness of the various allied health careers, including nuclear medicine.

Many issues, then are before us in the coming year, and the Technologist Section is approaching them from different angles. Whenever I think we should try to change something, I step back and think of the Chinese proverb: "We cannot change the wind, but we can adjust our sails." We must make sure that we are not trying to adjust the wind—for if we are, we are not likely to succeed. But if we are adjusting our sails, then it is just the matter of finding the right course.

I believe this year will prove to be interesting and rewarding as we adjust our sails for the future.

—Kristen Waterstram-Rich, CNMT
President, SNM-TS
Rochester, NY

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Annual Meeting Sessions

Various categorical seminars and continuing education sessions at the SNM Annual Meeting will address nuclear cardiology, as will several vendors on the exhibit floor. CME credit is available for the courses. To obtain more information visit our website at www.snm.org, call our Fax-on Demand Service at (888) 398-7662 or call the Meetings Department at (703) 708-9000, ext. 1229.

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