

Enriching Professional Lives

The Society of Nuclear Medicine actively inaugurates and participates in programs and events to enrich its members' professional lives. SNM advances the highest standards in the practice of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, addresses socioeconomic and governmental issues that significantly affect our profession, and promotes and maintains the highest standards of research and education. SNM has set out on a strategic course, with the aim to go as far as it can professionally—and then go even farther.

By Examining Health Care Policy and Practice

Members of our Committee on Health Care Policy and Practice are examining our profession's pressing issues. In examining pay-for-performance issues, committee members are developing procedure guidelines for myocardial perfusion, for general imaging, and for the use of radiopharmaceuticals. Committee members, headed by Robert Henkin, MD, are also studying same-day PET/CT, the American College of Radiology's designated physician imager program and our own physician-directed quality program, and supplying information regarding the credentialing of nuclear medicine physicians to interpret CT and PET/CT.

Entwined with this work will be the activities of the members of 2 other newly developed bodies: the Phase IV and Clinical Trials Committees. SNM is in the process of developing standards for using integrated PET/CT systems and addressing equipment specifications, image acquisition protocols, supervision, interpretation, professional qualifications, and safety. Work on PET/CT standards grew out of discussions with allies and resulted in publication of "Concurrent PET/CT with an Integrated Imaging System: Intersociety Dialogue from the Joint Working Group of the American College of Radiology, the Society of Nuclear Medicine, and the Society of Computed Body Tomography and Magnetic Resonance."

By Establishing a Molecular Imaging Focus

SNM's Nuclear Medicine Clinical Trials Group has been structured as a limited liability company, and its members now have the framework and infrastructure necessary to conduct multicenter clinical trials—with an emphasis on molecular imaging. Over time, these small trials are expected to encompass all the interests and possible applications of molecular imaging and diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine. For example, clinical trials may be run to evaluate the effectiveness of new therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals or of using PET imaging as a surrogate marker for clinical outcomes when evaluating new therapeutic interventions.

Officially launched this past summer, the Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (COE) is dedicated to all aspects of molecular imaging for the detection and

management of disease. The center and its board members are responsible for developing all society-sponsored continuing education programs in molecular imaging. It focuses on significant issues important to the translation of new developments in molecular imaging to clinical practice and works closely with the Clinical Trials

Group regarding the development of protocols for translational research. Molecular Imaging COE members will work with industry representatives to identify opportunities for cooperative programs in education and research in the field of molecular imaging.

Our talks with allies about the field of molecular imaging continue. We recently cosponsored a meeting with the Radiological Society of North America and the participants from the first Molecular Imaging Summit in Chicago. We discussed the advantages of a group approach with members of Congress, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other federal agencies when it comes to seeking nuclear and molecular imaging research funding. SNM officers suggested that two subcommittees be developed: one to determine opportunities to network with government leaders and one to explore applying for institutional research training grants and providing feedback on NIH "roadmap" and "blueprint" initiatives in identifying major opportunities and gaps in biomedical research.

By Focusing on PET, Governmental Issues

SNM has joined allied organizations in supporting the Uniform Protocols for Imaging in Clinical Trials. A joint committee will establish widely acceptable standard protocols for PET, MR, and CT imaging in clinical trials; map out an annual strategy; and seek outside funding to support activities.

SNM officers have worked with representatives of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and have been informed in advance of that agency's proposed Current Good Manufacturing Practices regulation for the production of PET drugs. This regulation, along with a draft guidance document, will ensure that PET drug products meet safety, identity, strength, quality, and purity requirements. This is a major step forward in health care for patients, assuring that individuals are receiving high-quality drugs. SNM leaders have had consistently good dialogue with FDA officers on related issues and are encouraged to hear that progress is being made on the exploratory investigational new drug process. SNM's PET/CT coalition will continue to work on educating representatives of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid on the benefits of PET/CT and advocate for its coverage.



Peter S. Conti

Established more than 2 years ago, SNM's PET Center of Excellence is dedicated to all aspects of the development and utilization of PET and PET/CT in the detection and management of disease. The center focuses on educational programs and practical issues directly related to PET and PET/CT, including clinical practice, procedure guidelines, and reimbursement. The center, which has 1,800 members, will sponsor a continuing medical education track at the Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, and a special workshop for the development of protocols for PET/CT dual-modality imaging. The center recently held its first election, selecting the following officers: James W. Fletcher, MD, president; Homer A. Macapinlac, MD, vice president; and Nancy M. Swanston, CNMT, RT(N), secretary/treasurer.

SNM met with representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and discussed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which grants NRC authority over naturally occurring and accelerator-produced materials. We will continue to support regulations that guard the public from unnecessary exposure to radiation while simultaneously protecting medical/scientific accessibility to these materials for nuclear medicine procedures and research.

By Promoting Education, Research

Our outstanding education program continues to grow to meet the needs of our members, as illustrated by the

recent launching of Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program modules to meet maintenance of certification requirements. Equally important is our responsibility to support and present research. For 6 straight years, the quality and influence of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* has continued to rise, moving from third to second place among nuclear medicine, radiology, and medical imaging journals, based on its impact factor, an estimate of the citation rate of the journal's papers. This growth in influence and prestige underscores the importance of the scientific and clinical research we publish each month.

Support for education and research continues to grow. For 2006, the Education and Research Foundation and the Professional Development and Education Fund are providing more than \$240,000 for SNM- and SNMTS-sponsored scholarships, research grants, awards, and programs. This generous increase in support is made possible by corporate and individual donors committed to helping SNM and SNMTS extend opportunities to the molecular imaging community.

As SNM continues to enrich the profession this year, we will be able to live with greater vision and a finer spirit of achievement.

*Peter S. Conti, MD, PhD, FACR, FACNP
President, SNM*

Preparing for the Future

The Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologist Section is meeting the future head on: its officers have deliberated—and support—baccalaureate degree entry-level requirements for nuclear medicine technologists (NMTs) and the development of a master's degree-level nuclear medicine practitioner (NMP). These 2 initiatives will help us build our future, ensuring continued success for the nuclear medicine profession.

SNMTS leaders recently discussed these 2 initiatives at a 2005 education summit in Reston, VA, welcoming educators from certificate, associate, and baccalaureate programs as well as representatives from accrediting and professional organizations in the radiological sciences. Participating in the summit were 24 individuals representing the American College of Radiology, the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology, the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board, and the Section for Magnetic Resonance Technologists.

Summit participants examined education requirements and competencies needed for both the entry-level NMT and

an advanced NMP. Our National Council of Representatives (NCOR), the SNMTS Executive Board, and SNM's board of directors approved position papers for both ideas at the society's Annual Meeting last summer. Summit participants realized the importance of developing a core curriculum and of bridging associate and certificate programs to a bachelor of science degree. It was also agreed that becoming an advanced NMP would involve earning a master's degree.

SNMTS is especially grateful to the Professional Development and Education Fund, which has provided a \$20,000 grant for the development of CT educational programs for technologists and 2 grants in the amount of \$20,000 each for implementing the NMP program, which may be available as early as the 2007 fall term.

Entry-Level NMTs

SNMTS has observed that new advancements in multimodal imaging and therapy—and increasing demands for accountability—require increasing levels of skill and



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