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.


Valerie R. Cronin

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

knowledge not easily delivered within the current structure of entry-level educational programs. The summit allowed SNMTS officers to discuss the obstacles to implementing new recommendations about entry-level requirements and to brainstorm methods to implement such requirements.

Baccalaureate entry-level requirements will not affect current nuclear medicine technologists and will need to satisfy educational progression needs for those moving to the NMP level. This "2+2" model—2 years of general studies plus 2 years of professional curriculum—was identified as the most suitable baccalaureate model. Core curriculum and general education requirements to meet these needs were identified and discussed. Attendees produced a draft curriculum of 121–124 hours for an entry-level program that consists of prerequisites (general education), core curriculum (anatomy, chemistry, physics, algebra, statistics, etc.), professional technical courses (biomedical ethics, cross-sectional anatomy, instrumentation, radiation safety, patient care, emerging technologies, etc.), and electives (health care management, microbiology, genetics, cellular biology, etc.).

Summit attendees discussed the importance of NMTs achieving competence in the molecular sciences and of becoming technically competent, well-rounded, critical thinkers. It was voiced that to achieve professional status in the eyes of the federal government, the profession must require a bachelor's degree for entry level and that technologists need to be involved in lifelong learning.

SNMTS would like to have the new standards in place by 2010 and all NMT programs apply the baccalaureate degree by 2015. The priority of this process is to phase up—not phase out—existing programs. Another goal is to do a better job of communicating with members and stakeholders. To accomplish these goals, subgroups were appointed to focus on programmatic transition, core curriculum, collaborating with external stakeholders, and outreach to the nuclear medicine community.

Advanced Practice NMT

As part of its most recent strategic plan, SNMTS was charged with evaluating the need and the desire for an advanced level of clinical practice for NMTs. As the profession of nuclear medicine has matured and changes in health care have occurred over the past years, many NMTs have taken on roles in the clinical practice setting that are generally considered over and above the entry-level practice domain. Today, technologists may be asked (under the supervision of a physician) to administer interventional drugs, stress and monitor cardiac patients, and/or obtain an informed consent for specified procedures. NMTs must acquire new skills to keep up with technically complex SPECT and PET imaging in the new world of molecular imaging. Technologists and physicians have been surveyed about—and are supportive of—the development of an advanced nuclear medicine practitioner.

Summit participants discussed the competencies and curricular requirements for developing a master's degree–level NMP program—a new level of opportunity for SNMTS members. It was agreed that the curriculum will be geared toward a general practitioner—rather than a specialist—and that the length of the program should be approximately 2 years. The proposed competencies will be presented to NCOR and Executive Board members for approval at this month's SNM's Mid-Winter Educational Symposium.

This year, SNMTS will continue to build the future of the nuclear medicine profession for our members and nonmembers alike.

Valerie R. Cronin, CNMT, FSNMTS
President, SNMTS

Delivering Quality

The quality of the Society of Nuclear Medicine's programs, courses, meetings, products, and services is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution. Guided by SNM leaders, it is the society's habit to provide the best for our members—and this year's balanced, fiscally sound budget continues to deliver crucial programs and services to 16,000 physician, technologist, and scientist members.

In Knowledge Power

The words *groundbreaking*, *improved*, and *powerful* aptly describe our diverse educational programs. We successfully launched our Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program, allowing nuclear medicine health care professionals to fulfill maintenance of certification requirements. Self-assessment modules will be released throughout the year, providing online continuing education to all our members. In addition, the SNM Learning Center was reorganized, focusing on advanced programs with a wider range of topics rather than on basic PET workshops. Society officers will continue to monitor trends in educational offerings to provide the most current topics, keeping the center offerings relevant to members—

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Virginia Pappas