

Education and Research Foundation for the SNM

The Education and Research Foundation (ERF) for the Society of Nuclear Medicine had a successful year in 2005 due to the generosity of the many members of SNM as well as industry. Its relationship with the SNM through the Strategic Alliance has continued and evolved to truly become a collaborative effort that has and will continue to benefit both organizations and nuclear medicine. Since the society assumed the responsibility of awarding the grants and awards that were previously the responsibility of the foundation, the ERF has been able to focus on its primary mission: raising funds to further the art and science of nuclear medicine.

At the 2006 SNM Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada, the generosity of the nuclear medicine community was recognized by the foundation on the Honor Roll of Donors and was highlighted by the award of round-trip airline tickets for 3 winners in a drawing held at the ERF booth.

The ERF received more than 500 gifts in 2005, including a \$25,000 grant from Mallinckrodt, which will support a new award in 2006. Digirad Corporation also provided \$10,000 for a 2006 pilot research grant to be made in memory of Dr. William Ashburn. The Alavi family generously gave more than \$80,000 to increase the Alavi Fund, which supports several awards made by the SNM. These generous donations enabled the ERF to provide more than \$100,000 to support SNM grants and awards for 2005 and more than \$136,000 in support for 2006. A great number of SNM members provided the ERF with gifts as well during this year. Most significantly, the leadership of the society generously supported the ERF fundraising campaign.

In 2005, the ERF supported 30 Paul Cole scholarships of \$1,000 each and 5 Pilot Research Grants, one of which was the \$10,000 Blahd Pilot Research grant. In addition, 7 student fellowships, each providing \$3,000 for a medical or graduate student to spend a summer doing research in nuclear medicine,

were supported by the foundation, as were several other awards, including the Tetalman Award. The Alavi Fund also provided for 62 subscriptions to *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine (JNM)* for institutions in developing countries, as well as a number of awards for articles written by nuclear medicine trainees and published in *JNM*.

After the tragic death of Dr. Robert Lull, the SNM, American College of Nuclear Physicians, American Board of Nuclear Medicine, and ERF together established a fund in his name. To date more than \$25,000 has been given to the fund by members and friends of Dr. Lull. Because Dr. Lull was an outstanding educator and dedicated to teaching, the funds will be used to support young nuclear medicine professionals. The 4 organizations will determine the specific kind of awards that the fund will support.

At the fall retreat in November, the ERF board made plans for the 2006 fundraising campaign. The 2006 campaign year will again be a cooperative effort with the SNM. The foundation will focus on individual donations, and the SNM will focus on corporate contributions. To meet the needs of the molecular imaging and nuclear medicine community, the foundation looks forward to being able to increase its support of the SNM grants and awards program. The generosity of the members of the SNM will help to make this possible. Please remember the foundation as you consider your charitable giving in the coming year.



Sue Weiss

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Executive Director

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SNM Government Relations Report

Department of Energy

The administration's FY 2006 budget request for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science cut approximately \$23 million from the Medical Applications and Measurement Science program within the Office of Biological and Environmental Research (OBER)—a program that supported more than 80 basic nuclear medicine research projects in educational institutions, national laboratories, and private companies across the United States. SNM led a coalition of like-minded

specialty societies and patient advocacy groups on a long government relations campaign to get the money reinstated through the Congressional Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittees. After an uplifting victory in the House of Representatives,

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the Senate unfortunately remained silent on the issue. In the version of the bill that ultimately became law, the House and Senate appropriated the money but committed it to specific, “earmarked” projects rather than to basic nuclear medicine research.

Although the loss was devastating for basic research projects formerly funded through the DOE OBER, the campaign to restore the program ultimately caught the administration’s attention, and, as a result, the DOE, National Institutes of Health, and National Academy of Sciences will collaborate on a study of the future of U.S.-funded nuclear medicine research in 2006. In the meantime, SNM will continue to fight for basic research and will focus future efforts on finding a permanent home for these projects.

Coding and Reimbursement

Led by Gary Dillehay, MD, the SNM Coding and Reimbursement Working Group compiled and submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding the 2006 Healthcare Common Procedure Code System (HCPCS). Due in part to the committee’s comments, the 2006 file contains significant changes suggested by SNM for many of the radiopharmaceuticals—specifically, 32 new, 24 revised, and 44 deleted radiopharmaceutical HCPCS Level II codes took effect January 1. At the request of the nuclear medicine community, the CMS HCPCS Workgroup implemented a simplified and user-friendly new standard format for radiopharmaceuticals, effective 2006. Also, all codes were changed to “A” series HCPCS codes, which will break down site-of-services variations for 2006. For the long haul, these radiopharmaceutical HCPCS Level II changes are significant accomplishments for the SNM.

The SNM Coding and Reimbursement Working Group also compiled and submitted comments regarding the 2006 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (HOPPS) rule and the 2006 Physician Fee Schedule rule to the CMS. The SNM was successful in many of their comments and suggestions, as evidenced in both final rules. The SNM plans to meet with CMS on some outstanding issues in 2006 regarding 2007 payments for many nuclear medicine procedures.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

As part of an ongoing effort to improve relations with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), SNM members Terence Beven, MD, Alan Packard, PhD, Gary Dillehay, MD, and Roy Brown participated in meetings regarding Section 651(e) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which granted the NRC regulatory authority over naturally occurring and accelerator-produced radioactive materials (NARM).

SNM took the position of supporting regulations that would guard the public from unnecessary exposure to radiation while simultaneously protecting medical/scientific accessibility to accelerator-produced materials for nuclear medicine procedures and research. However, SNM warned the NRC against duplicative regulatory burden that would stifle the benefits of PET and SPECT through delays, double fees, etc. SNM requested that NRC staff carefully weigh the public benefit gained from future NARM regulations against the potential costs and burdens to scientific progress, and, more important, patient care.

Food and Drug Administration

Led by Henry VanBrocklin, PhD, a working group compiled and submitted SNM comments regarding exploratory investigational new drug studies and PET drug Current Good Manufacturing Practices rule/guidance. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continues to work with nuclear medicine experts on a wide variety of topics, and collaboration between the FDA, medical societies, and industry continues to be beneficial for everyone involved, particularly patients in need of nuclear medicine procedures.

USP

Led by Joseph Hung, PhD, the SNM Committee on Pharmacopeia (COP) compiled and submitted comments regarding proposed revisions to U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) <797>. The SNM COP continues to be a premier source of USP knowledge within the nuclear medicine community and is actively involved with relevant USP expert committees.

*Hugh Cannon
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Physics Applications in Nuclear Medicine: Organization and Progress

The year 2005 was again a year of significant progress in the area of physics applications in nuclear medicine. Significant developments were seen in detector development and reconstruction technology, and new tools became available. The dosimetry community organized

several important compendia of literature resources. Electronic resources continued to be developed and disseminated, as is the trend in almost all areas of daily professional life.

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