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## The SNM Strategic Plan for Education

The SNM Committee on Education held a meeting on September 16, 2005, to review the society's educational program to ensure that it meets our strategic goals and the needs of SNM members and other health care professionals with an interest in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. The committee considered 4 significant issues facing medical education:

1. Maintenance of certification (MOC);
2. Emerging technologies in nuclear medicine/molecular imaging;
3. The need for more online education; and

4. The fragmentation of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

These 4 issues will have a significant and long-term impact on the way health care professionals in nuclear medicine/molecular imaging choose to educate themselves and on how providers of education develop and implement educational activities.

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) MOC process is a major focus of the educational activities of the SNM. At the Mid-Winter Meeting in January 2004, the Board of Directors approved the business plan for

SNM's new Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program (LLSAP), which has been developed to meet Part 2 of the new MOC requirements—continuous self-assessment. The first 4 modules were launched last December, with an additional 56 modules planned for introduction during 2006. Each module includes a syllabus with the latest information in the field, board-type multiple-choice questions with discussion of correct and incorrect answers, and interactive case studies with the opportunity for the participant to compare his or her report of the case with that of an expert. The cases utilizing PET/CT include images in Digital Imaging and Communication in Medicine format and software to create a virtual workstation for participants.

The SNM is also developing sets of interactive cases focusing on CT and PET/CT. These cases will help physicians meet the requirements for Part 4 of the ABMS MOC. The SNM will be working closely with the American Board of Nuclear Medicine to develop more tools for Part 4 over the next year.

Emerging technologies formed the second focus of discussion by the Committee on Education during its strategic planning meeting. Two years ago, the SNM began to make changes in its educational activities to accommodate the trend from PET to PET/CT fusion and other fusion imaging modalities. The Learning Center revamped its curriculum and offerings in January 2004, including the addition of more neurology PET/CT, cardiac PET/CT, and advanced oncology PET/CT workshops and symposia. In 2006, the Learning Center will add educational activities in CT and molecular imaging for physicians and in CT and cross-sectional anatomy for technologists.

Related to the issue of emerging technologies is the trend among health care professionals to rely increasingly on the Internet to access information and participate in educational activities. Data reviewed by the Committee on Education from a variety of sources, including the recent SNM Workforce Survey, confirmed this trend. As a result, many of the educational products offered in 2006 will be Web-based. The

SNM Learning Center began to offer courses online in January, with plans to offer the advanced oncology PET/CT, neurology PET/CT, and cardiac PET/CT courses online during 2006. In addition, a new format with both online and live activities will be introduced this year for technologists. The Learning Center will offer a weekend CT workshop that includes online prerequisite courses. If this combination format is well received, more may be planned in the future. Additional future projects being planned by the SNM Education Program Development Committee include a case-based journal offering continuing education credit and online educational activities for SNM's scientist and pharmacist members.

Finally, there are many societies and organizations with an interest in nuclear medicine/molecular imaging, and within the SNM itself there are chapters, councils and centers of excellence. Many of these groups are vying to provide the nuclear medicine/molecular imaging professionals with educational programs. Among the action items targeted for this year as a result of the strategic planning meeting are efforts to collaborate with these organizations to share resources, expertise, and content to provide optimal educational activities for all members.

The Committee on Education has appointed a monitoring team to continually assess the needs of SNM members based on changes in technology and the marketplace and the success of current and new educational activities over the next year. The purpose of this team is to ensure that SNM's educational program continues to meet the needs of its members and to assist them in their ever-changing practices.

*Tom R. Miller, MD, PhD*  
*Chair, SNM Committee on Education*

*Alan H. Maurer, MD*  
*Chair, SNM Education Programs Development Committee*

*N. Lynn Barnes, MEd*  
*Director of Education, SNM*

## SNM Brain Imaging Council

The SNM Brain Imaging Council (BIC) has been active in the initial part of its 2005–2006 term. One of the goals for the council has been to draft procedure guidelines for  $^{18}\text{F}$ -FDG PET brain imaging for SNM. Alan Waxman, MD, is heading a task force charged with drafting the guidelines. Work is ongoing at this point.

The BIC Board of Directors (BOD) will meet at the 2006 SNM Mid-Winter Meeting in Tempe, AZ, on February 11. At this meeting we will continue to pursue guideline development and also address the status of normal database compilation for  $^{18}\text{F}$ -FDG PET brain images. Just as the normal database of  $^{99\text{m}}\text{Tc}$  brain perfusion radiopharmaceu-

tical SPECT was compiled and made available by the BIC, the goal for a normal database for  $^{18}\text{F}$ -FDG PET brain scans will be to aid in the education and research missions of the BIC as the practice of brain imaging with PET becomes a major tool in clinical medicine. We have noted that the initial Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approval of  $^{18}\text{F}$ -FDG PET in 2004 for differentiation of



**David H. Lewis**

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