



Converting Activity into Visibility

The society has initiated an effort to increase its visibility—along with that of molecular and nuclear imaging—through activities described in its new 3-year public relations (PR) plan. Implementation of the new plan, approved by members of the society's PR Committee, began this past spring. Since then, the society has had numerous successes: in the amount of media coverage achieved; in the number of reporter queries to headquarters; in the diversity of press release content; and in attracting attention from trade publications, general interest (consumer/patient) publications, professional and specialty Web sites, consumer Web sites, and broadcast stations.

As chair of the PR Committee, I can tell you that public relations is integral to the society's strategic goals of increasing public recognition and familiarity with molecular/nuclear imaging, contributing to the profession's significant growth in science and utilization, and continuing as an essential center of knowledge for members and professionals. Success on the public relations front can be far reaching—for example, as educated consumers investigate the potential of molecular and nuclear imaging, as research-funding opportunities are opened, and as insurance coverage of related procedures is increased. Ultimately, the society seeks to ensure that whenever a referring physician, patient, consumer, government legislator or regulator, media representative, educator, medical student, career service officer, industry representative, health insurance official, or non-member needs reliable, accurate information about molecular and nuclear imaging, he or she looks to SNM.

One way to bring attention to the profession and the society is to get our news—about research, government relations activities, and society actions—reported in the profession-specific and general press. For the first time, SNM is closely monitoring media impressions/press hits—the estimated number of people who may have read, seen, or heard about SNM and its members in a printed news story or an online story or radio/television broadcast. This allows us to better understand how, where, and how often the society is mentioned, as well as establishing a baseline for comparison to help us measure the results of our new initiatives.

For the period from October 2004 through October 2005, more than 76 million individuals have read, heard, or seen news about the society and its members. In this same period, the number of society press releases—focusing on government relations and research presented in *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* or at the Annual Meeting—has doubled.

Significant press mentions—resulting from press releases distributed to the society's comprehensive media list—were routed through Reuters and Associated Press news agencies; other major press hits included MSNBC and *Consumer Reports*. Articles appeared in all kinds of publications—from trade publications such as *Medical Imaging* and *FDA News* to big city newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* to business outlets such as *Forbes* magazine.

The top SNM news stories in the consumer press, based on our coverage summary, focused on nuclear medicine procedures setting off radiation alarms, imaging Alzheimer's, the effects of having coffee before a CT scan, and the society's efforts to include basic nuclear medicine research in the federal budget. In the trade press, research published in *JNM* or released at the Annual Meeting was reported widely.

SNM continues to build the foundation for its PR program. Fact sheets are being developed to send to reporters and government representatives. Key audiences have been pinpointed, and officers have worked on key messages. Internet metatags have been developed to ensure SNM's site gets top placement in Internet search results for nuclear medicine keywords. The number of calls from reporters is constant, demonstrating our success in positioning SNM as an expert source of molecular imaging and nuclear medicine-related information for the media.

PR Committee members are recommending possible resources/interviewees for incoming press requests; they have also identified SNM/SNMTS members for inclusion in an online experts listing. At SNM's Annual Meeting in June, SNM officers who deal frequently with media were professionally trained in media communications. Other efforts in the current plan include developing an online press room, initiating a Members in the News section, and possibly exploring a branding event—an annual event connected to SNM that attracts media attention.

SNM's PR plan is an ambitious undertaking, and the initiatives in this first 3-year plan are just a start on a goal that may take many years to achieve.



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