



High Standards

Standards are what we use to compare what exists to an ideal. As I begin my term as SNM TS president, I'd like to call on all members to reflect on the standards you apply in your work, with your education, and in your life. My focus this year will be all in the details of maintaining the Technologist Section's high standards.

It is especially imperative to measure our current practice standards on a more frequent basis in light of all the emerging technologies (PET and SPECT with CT, PET/MR) and new radiopharmaceuticals evolving in our workplaces so we may continue to provide high-quality patient care as we evolve into imaging specialists. Technologists need to be educated in basic sciences, genetics, cell biology, and more. We can only imagine today where all the coming advances are leading us. In addition, we need to evaluate mechanisms for recruiting non-nuclear imaging professionals, such as those who have radiology backgrounds and practice functional MR imaging or practice in laboratory environments and use research methodologies such as small animal PET and PET/CT.

Our educational system must be evaluated to ensure programs include emerging technologies. This challenge is as daunting for 4-year baccalaureate programs as it is for 2-year or certificate programs, as many general education courses are often required in addition to nuclear medicine technology-specific coursework.

Perhaps our greatest ongoing challenge will be to develop mechanisms to educate and train practicing technologists. In addition to more workshops and interactive online content, preceptorship programs must be developed to allow practicing technologists to obtain clinical training. We have initiated state-of-the-art career preparation in our educational programs, such as our CT workshops, cardiology symposia, and online courses specifically for technologists.

This year has the potential to be remembered as a landmark year in the history of nuclear medicine. SNM's board of directors approved an expanded core purpose for the society: *To improve health care by advancing molecular imaging and therapy*. The Technologist Section must be prepared to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities provided by advancements in molecular imaging and therapy.

Expanded goals include being members' indispensable resource for education, knowledge exchange, training, and

networking; the powerful advocate for molecular medicine, including imaging and therapy; the leader in educating and promoting collaboration with referring physician and patient groups; and a significant supporter of innovations in translational research. SNM will emerge as the society that positions molecular medicine as an essential tool in providing the highest standards of patient care around the world. Related to this, there may be a new "look" and eventually a name change for the society.



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Such expansion may be accompanied with fear of the unknown associated with leaving the comfort of the familiar. In order for the Technologist Section to be successful, a certain amount of courage and faith will be required in addition to careful, objective examination of our rapidly changing field. We must not only survey what technology is currently being used but also establish a mechanism to adapt and quickly prepare practicing technologists with comprehensive educational programs for anticipated advancements. To continue to operate in a reactive manner—rather than acting proactively—is not in the best interests of the membership and, more important, the patients and physicians we serve.

High standards will be applied as the Technologist Section stewards a baccalaureate degree entry-level requirement for technologists by 2015 and the development of a master's degree-level nuclear medicine practitioner. We will continue our fight for the Consumer Assurance of Radiologic Excellence (CARE) and RadCARE bills, which support federal minimum standards for nuclear medicine and radiologic technologists and radiation therapists. In addition, the Technologist Section will continue to press on insurance coverage and reimbursement issues and for increased funding for key medical radioisotope production and basic science research at the Department of Energy.

I urge you to become involved in some way within SNM TS; we could use a few good women and men to fight for SNM TS initiatives. Remember, setting high standards—in your work, with your education, and in your life—makes every day and each decade worth looking forward to. ✧