

SNM Actions to Restore Basic Research Funding

In late October, Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) distributed a letter to her colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives asking Appropriations Committee leaders to agree with the Senate language and numbers that restore funding for basic nuclear medicine research at the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science. As soon as Rep. Maloney's letter is finalized—most likely before the publication of this issue of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*—the SNM and American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP) will post the names of the representatives who cosigned.

On October 30, SNM ran a full-page advertisement in *Roll Call*—the Capitol Hill newspaper most read by legislators and legislative staff—to support the restoration of funding for basic nuclear medicine research at the DOE Office of Science. The ad called on the House to agree with the Senate version of energy appropriations for fiscal year 2008. SNM also developed a press release announcing the publication of the advertisement, worked with SNM/ACNP consultants to distribute the ad on the Hill, and asked members of the medical community to forward the ad to their legislators.

To view more information about this important issue and/or to view the press release and *Roll Call* advertisement, please visit www.snm.org/governmentrelations. Find out how you can help at www.snm.org/action.

Revised 2008 CPT Codes: Important Changes for Nuclear Medicine Professionals

The American Medical Association (AMA) recently released the 2008 CPT codes that will be effective on January 1, 2008. As a reminder, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) no longer allows a grace period for implementation of any code sets. This year you will find some minor changes in the nuclear medicine section. There are no new codes; however, 1 code was deleted and there are several editorial revisions. Other sections of interest to nuclear medicine professionals are the Cardiac CTA category III codes (with minor clarifying editorial changes) as well as some changes to the modifiers.

Each year the SNM Coding & Reimbursement Workgroup reviews sections of the nuclear medicine CPT codes based on questions from SNM members. The workgroup then recommends changes to the AMA CPT Editorial Panel to clarify the appropriate use of these codes based on current medical practice. For 2008, nuclear medicine pro-

fessionals will see changes to the brain imaging codes and some of the PET codes. We also encourage nuclear medicine professionals to review the 2008 modifiers (full descriptions), because many of these have been changed to provide clarification on appropriate use.

To view the specific revisions to the 2008 CPT codes, please visit the SNM Coding Corner at www.snm.org/coding.



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Accreditation Standards for CT Laboratories Released

The Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Computed Tomography Laboratories (ICACTL) recently released standards for laboratories delivering CT imaging services. Created by representatives of 10 professional societies, including SNM, the ICACTL standards provide a national benchmark for evaluating quality in CT laboratories.

The ICACTL standards include 2 documents: 1 outlining laboratory operations, such as personnel qualifications, physical facilities, and data archiving; and the other defining quality measures for instrumentation, patient preparation, and testing procedures.

The ICACTL standards are available online at www.icactl.org. CT accreditation is not limited to cardiovascular procedures. In addition to cardiovascular CT angiography, ICACTL offers accreditation in whole-body CT (chest, abdomen, pelvis, extremities), whole-body noncardiac CT angiography, neuroimaging and neuro CT angiography, and sinus and temporal bone CT. Specific requirements for each CT system are listed in part II of the ICACTL standards.

Laboratories interested in applying for accreditation will be able to submit their applications later this year. Application materials will be available from ICACTL later this month, and the deadline for application will be quarterly on the first business days of December, March, June, and September. SNM encourages all laboratories offering CT imaging services to apply for accreditation through ICACTL, because this process provides an objective assessment of how well a laboratory is meeting standards outlined in clinical guidelines and evidence-based research. ✧